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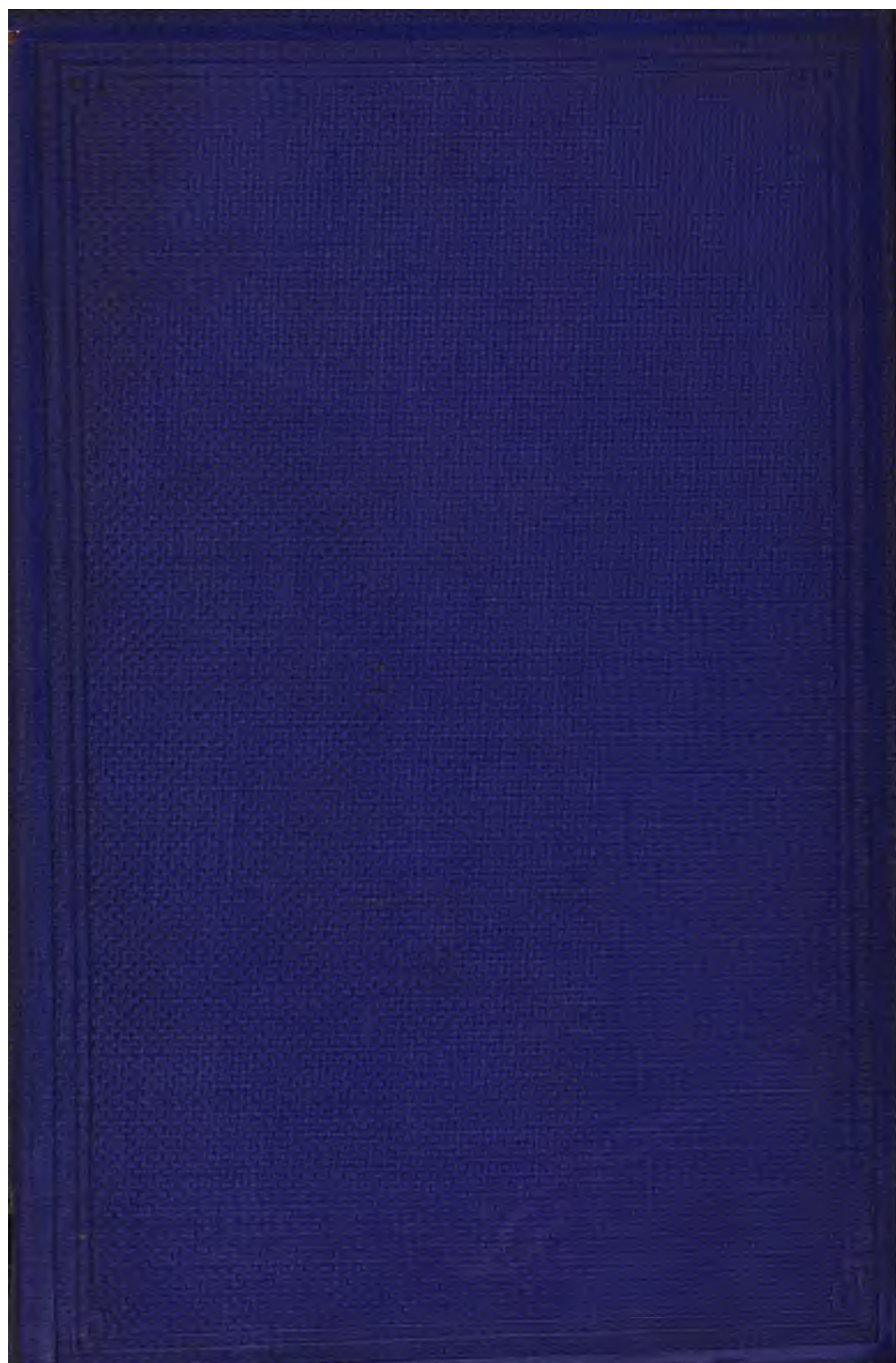
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MARTIN TOBIN

A NOVEL

BY

LADY CAMPBELL

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I



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MARTIN TOBIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST TRIP FORWARDS.

IN the churchyard at Slyndhurst stands a grey granite tombstone, bearing this simple inscription :

“ BRIDGET TOBIN, DIED JANUARY, 1835.”

“ Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Reader, that tombstone marks the last resting-place of my dear mother. Her love had

been all in all to me, and it was not until death stepped in and left me alone in a friendless world, that I realized the full extent of the love which had been mine so long. I knew of no ties of kindred, but, by my mother's dying wish, the clergyman of the parish was appointed my guardian, and accordingly to the Rectory I removed. Yet though my mother had placed this great confidence in Mr. Cary (I did not then know why), I knew little of his history, saving that many years before his wife had deserted him, leaving him with one son.

How he had borne his trials might be easily learnt from the holy, child-like meekness and Christian love and charity that shone forth in each and every of the Vicar's actions. Every one in and near Slyndhurst respected and loved him, and none more truly than I did.

Frank Cary, his only child, and I had been

sworn friends from the day of my mother's occupation of the "Lodge;" and although too young to remember anything except some peculiarly striking event, my first acquaintance with Frank is indelibly fixed upon my memory. I believe we had only been located in our new home a few hours, when a gentleman leading a little boy opened the garden gate, and walked up to the porch, where I was playing alone, having been placed there by my mother while she helped the newly-arrived domestic to arrange some of the household affairs.

The gentleman looked very hard at me for some minutes, and then, stroking my head, asked me what my name was. I answered boldly Martin Tobin, and was very much perplexed to see him stagger back as if struck, and, leaning against the porch, cover his face with both his hands. I watched him for a second or two, when my attention was drawn

away to the boy, who came up to me, and putting his arms round my neck, told me I was his brother come back from heaven. Hearing my mother's voice I pulled him in, and taking him to her, told her what he said, and that his father was crying in the porch.

"And who is your father, my little fellow?" asked my mother, taking the child in her arms.

"Frank Cary, ma'am, the clergyman. We live here, and go to see everybody."

I was watching my mother and wondering what she thought of the stranger, and saw her start and almost drop the child; then setting him hastily down, she told me to stay with him until she returned. I did so. She was absent a very, very long while, and when she returned she brought the gentleman with her. They were both grave, and spoke very solemnly of everything, but I did not wonder,

for Frank had been telling me that his little brother had died very lately.

From that day Frank and I were great friends, spending nearly all our time in each other's society, and becoming just as warmly attached as if we had been truly brothers; and although his father and my mother did all they could to encourage our affection, they seldom met, and seemed mutually to avoid each other. Time passed, and I was fifteen when my mother's death occurred.

Where we had come from and what her former history was, or where my father died, I had never heard, or, indeed, thought of; and it was not till long after that I began to feel any curiosity upon the subject—a curiosity it was too late to gratify, as the only person I believed could give me any information was far away.

A few weeks after I went to live with Mr. Cary he took me into his study, and asked

me if I had thought of my prospects in life, or what profession I should follow, telling me that although the property I inherited from my mother was by no means inconsiderable, he thought every young man ought to qualify himself to fill one of the many professions open to all. Frank was, I knew, going to be a clergyman, but I had no taste that way. Books of travel and adventure had long been my favourite study, and no life possessed such charms for me as that of a sailor, grasping, as it did, in my opinion, all the varied delights of change. I told Mr. Cary what I wished, but by his advice took a week to consider it over.

How true it is that often the most trifling events, apparently accidental, decide by one stroke the future of our years. My career was settled by reading a letter in a newspaper, I forget which. The letter was one addressed to the late Lord Durham upon

the subject of colonization in New Zealand. The words rang in my ears by day, and visions of the wonderful land of ever-green forests and sunny skies haunted my sleep. At the end of the week I had fully determined to become a colonist. The plan seemed to please my guardian, who immediately wrote to London for all the information then extant; the result of which letter was a parcel of books containing as much as was then known of the history and prospects of the land I had determined to make my home.

During the following year I studied the few works upon the country that I could obtain, and having mastered every resource within my reach, Mr. Cary proposed taking me to London, where he would introduce me to some of the directors of the company then forming, with the intention of commencing a settlement in New Zealand. During the past year, 1836, the affairs of the country

had been forced upon the notice of the Houses of Parliament. The first committee convened made inquiry into the state of the aborigines, and terrible indeed was the picture presented to the minds of the public. Rampant cannibalism, mingled with every species of European crime, imported by the outcasts to whom, by the negligence and incapacity of those by whom it ought to have been cared for, the first steps in colonization had been left; a few missionaries struggling on amidst mockery and opposition; and all this going on in a land fitted by nature to become one of the brightest jewels in the British crown. The second committee, which sat in the same year, undertook an inquiry into the disposal of waste lands, with the view to colonization. Before this board the evidence proving the evils of the system pursued in the colony was again cited. And so general became the impression that the country had been

mismanaged, that petitions were organized, beseeching the crown to take the colony under its protection, and set aside at once and for ever the self-acting government of "confederacy," the history of which I shall give subsequently.

The cause of New Zealand was warmly advocated by many of our leading politicians, and amongst its most untiring friends it had the good fortune to number the late Earl of Durham. Mr. Francis Baring acted as chairman of the company, which the beginning of 1837 saw established upon a firmer foundation than is generally the fate of joint-stock companies ; and it was under the directorship of this company that I proposed making my entrance upon a colonist's life.

Having completed my arrangements and being in readiness to start at a moment's notice, I returned to Slyndhurst, intending to stay at the Rectory until the company

should be in a position to send out its emigrants. I had taken care before leaving London to make arrangements by which I should be fully conversant with every proceeding in connection with my darling object. Six months passed by and nothing was accomplished. Their views were met with the disapproval of the higher powers both of church and state, and 1837 ended without any perceptible improvement or advance towards the establishment of the colony. Weary of this delay, and with weakened faith in the stability and energy of the association, I determined to go out singly and solely on my own account, a proceeding at first opposed by Mr. Cary on the ground of its rashness, but subsequently agreed to, when he found I looked upon it in a sober and sensible light, and had determined to face out all the difficulties I knew must lie in my path.

It was during the Christmas holidays that my mind became fully made up as to my emigration on my own responsibility. Frank was home from Cambridge, and sided entirely with my views, warmly commending my courage, and professing himself envious of the life of freedom I had chosen. There was only one who opposed it pertinaciously, and that was the only woman I had ever cared for besides my own dear mother. She was the eldest daughter of the village doctor, and somehow had gained a warm place in Mr. Cary's heart. Miny was always to be consulted when any change took place in his establishment ; she knew so much better than he did about the duties of servants, and managed everything for her sick mother with such precision and ability, that it was only natural that every one should look to her as an authority. So Miny appeared at the Rectory in every time of difficulty—and somehow

difficulties were continually occurring — so often, indeed, that I began to suspect the domestics of conspiring to raise these little storms to enliven their servitude. It so happened that Miny and I met every day, and being both young and having many interests in common, was it marvellous that we grew to love each other, as we thought only as brother and sister, but as time proved, with all the depth and unalterableness of a first passion? Miny, then, was the only one who opposed my plans of departing at once and unsupported to this new land.

How well I remember the evening I told her of my determination. We were sitting in an old rustic garden-seat in the rectory garden. Mr. Cary's establishment had been in a state of the most frightful rebellion, and Miny had for once been sent for when really required. It had taken her a couple of hours to hear both sides of the question, and finally settle

the disturbance, which resulted in the dismissal of the cook. I never saw Miny look angry before, but at this time I really did, and I felt it incumbent on me to soothe and comfort her to the best of my ability. The surest method I could think of to divert her thoughts, was to tell her of the determination I had come to, as to my departure. She did not understand what I meant at first, but when I had explained and put it clearly before her, the result was a burst of tears such as I had never seen till then. I was confounded. I did not know what to do, so I believe I did the best thing in my power, I sat silently by her side until the first burst was over, and let her speak before I offered to say anything. "Do you know what you are going to meet, Martin?" she asked, looking at me with glistering eyes, "you are such a boy to go away among savages, and begin the hardships of life."

Rather nettled at being called a boy, I answered :

“I am nearly twenty, Miny, and as old as you are. Why should I not find some means of being of use ? What am I here ?”

She gazed at me solemnly and said, “ You are in the position God placed you. You should be content with what he ordains, and wait his time.”

“ But I think I am doing his will, Miny. You are wrong. I have no position here. What am I to Mr. Cary ? (I know he is fond of me), but he too thinks I am right, though perhaps a little rash. When my mother died I lost all tie to England. I do not know of a single being with whom I can claim relationship. Oblivion, perhaps dishonour, is attached to my name. Why then should I not go ? Who cares where I am ?”

“ Oh ! Martin,” broke from Miny’s lips, “ you are harsh and unkind too ; you know”—

"What? Miny," I asked, the blood flowing back to my heart until it seemed to cease beating, and a feeling of intoxication rushing over me.

"What? Miny," I repeated, stooping forward until I touched her, and drew back as if from an electric shock.

She was still silent, but had ceased sobbing, and sat in the quiet evening with her tear-stained face shaded by her hand. My heart was now beating with almost choking force; the words sank back when I tried to speak. I would have given worlds to ask if "*she* cared for my going," "if *she* loved me," but my tongue refused utterance, the precious moment passed away, a minute more, and the doctor's gig drove up to the rectory. We heard the wheels, there was no excuse to mistake them; they were the only ones that ever disturbed the deep gravel of the drive.

"It is my father, Martin," said Miny,

rising and laying her hand upon my bent down head.

I looked up as I caught her hand. She grew pale and shrank back, but I saw it in her eyes; instinct told me she loved me, even without a word, and ignorant as I was of a lover's arts.

"Let me go to papa, Martin," whispered Miny; "oh! why have you made me forget you were not my brother?"

"Darling, you are dearer to me than ten thousand sisters," I cried; "let *me* go to your father."

All her confusion banished like lightning.

"What for?" she asked, a mischievous smile beaming in her eyes.

She knew what I meant by going to her father, and the absurdity of us two thinking seriously of marriage then burst upon me. Her laugh echoed in my heart, and thus our love-scene ended.

2

Frank came home a day or two afterwards, and by imperceptible degrees I began to feel things were changed. Of course I could understand Frank being first and foremost with the rector, but somehow he became so with every one else too, and even Miny shewed more deference to his opinion than to mine. But of all changes Frank's was the greatest. He was restless and impatient, contradicting his father, and then if the old man betrayed any grief at such undutiful conduct he would rush out of the house, and perhaps not return for hours.

One day the father and son had a dispute as to the efficacy of confession. I never saw the rector really angry before, but this time he shewed me that however subdued and controlled the spirit may become by misfortune, it is only veiled, not changed; and as I looked at the glowing face, the erect figure, and heard the deep, earnest and indignant tones of the

old man's voice as he strode up and down the little study, I felt I had never known him until now, or seen in the humble, broken-hearted wreck, the ghost of the former man. What then must have been the intensity of that love, the dishonouring of which could thus enchain the strongest passions, and highest intellects of man, and the magnitude of the wrong that could conquer nature herself!

I think Frank was as surprised as I was by this burst of his father's, and almost the same thoughts had been raised in his mind as in mine, as after the rector left the room he turned quickly to me and said, "Martin, I never knew till now what my father had suffered. My God! what a man he might have been but for her."

I did not know until then that Frank knew of his mother's disgrace, but he had heard it all at College from a foolish busy-tongued old

friend of the rector's, and the knowledge had sown the first seeds of a crop that in aftertime grew and ripened with fearful rapidity.

Verily, it is a terrible blow when the youthful heart, pure and honourable as its Maker would have it, is awakened to vice and dishonour by the act of one it had placed among the very holiest of its passions. Such it had been poor Frank's fate. With a mistaken idea of sparing his boy unnecessary pain, the rector had never breathed the mother's name. From infancy taught to look upon her as dead, the boy had taken his father's sadness for unhealed grief, and honouring him as he did, had naturally placed the memory of her to whose loss he attributed this unalterable sorrow among the purest of the angel world.

After telling me all he had heard, his only comment was, "The sins of the parent are visited upon the children. The curse is upon me already." It was in vain my trying to

comfort him : he refused to be consoled, and forbade me, for the sake of our affection, ever to mention the subject again.

The summer was advancing rapidly, but very different from any former summer. The rectory was a changed place, and it was with a feeling of intense relief that I received a summons to meet one of the New Zealand company's directors, in London by a certain day, when it was expected an arrangement as to liabilities, &c. would be fully settled, and the preliminaries of the first expedition decided. Frank, whose vacation was nearly over, decided on accompanying me, and together we left the dear rector.

I found the hopes of the company higher than ever, but as far from operation as before; and so disappointed was I with the uncertainty, together with the unsatisfactory answers given by the directors, that I determined to start forthwith upon my own

account; and although still willing to join the company's colonists upon the event of their effecting an understanding with the government, in the meanwhile I reserved free right to act independently, and settle or not as circumstances occurred.

Resolved not to leave a loophole for further doubt, I took my passage on board a Sydney-bound emigrant vessel, made all the necessary arrangements, and set off by the night mail to bid farewell to the only place and people from whom I felt it grief to part.

CHAPTER II.

THE "SWEET SORROW" OF PARTING.

PARTING is always sad, and even though there may be no ties of relationship to bind our hearts, experience teaches us that there are others which jar almost as painfully, and whose discordant ring resounds through the future just as weird-like. Night seems somehow the fittest time to bid farewell. There is something in the daylight that mocks and thus aggravates our grief. Every thing around us goes on heedless alike of joy or woe. Leaves rustle, streams flow, and flowers bloom, careless of the winter that has fallen upon

our heart. We are forced to think upon the mutability of our present suffering, and the thought adds new pain; for the heart clings to grief incorporating it with itself, as it were, until it seems desecration to tell it that the time will assuredly come when the darkness will pass away, and our present sorrow be remembered but as a holy and sacred hour, when seeing the world in its true light, we were drawn nearer to our God, and that home "that fadeth not away."

Night deals more tenderly with grief; mercifully giving it time to weep itself into repose, upon which day-light breaks tenderly and slowly as if reluctant to raise the veil, and recall us to the inevitable present. Gently and irresistibly we are led on minute by minute, "here a little and there a little," until in the full beam of the eternal sun, she points to heaven and whispers, "There is no lasting peace on earth, perfect peace comes from above."

It was at night I bid farewell to my Slyndhurst friends, all at least except the rector, who was astir at daybreak to see me into the mail.

I had lived among them from childhood to this my entrance upon manhood; and slight as our intercourse had been, we had grown together, and breathing the same air for so many years, had imperceptibly come to like each other. While my mother was alive the people had received her charity and kindly interference passively, and, as the poor often do, more as a right than a voluntary act; but no sooner was she dead than they began to find out what a friend they had lost, and her memory became a topic of neverfailing interest, her many good deeds and advice registered as household words. As may be supposed, the villagers, when they found they had too late become alive to my mother's kindness, eagerly lavished their gratitude

upon her son, and thus unknowingly I became a favourite, more I must say for her dear sake, than anything I ever did. All my actions were canvassed, and when it was known that I was to leave the forest upon the following day, a regular deputation came up to the rectory to wish me God speed. This was my first farewell. My second was the doctor's family, and dear Miny. If the truth were told, I believe the real cause of my making my departure so certain, was the fear of encountering any opposition from her. I think she saw through my object, and mercifully avoided anything that could damp my ardour, or throw a shadow upon my future.

The rector and I went down the village to the doctor's after I had bid farewell to the kindly people who had, as I said, come of their own freewill to shew me I had some friends.

The doctor had been to Southampton to attend a meeting, and had just got back hot

dusty, and tired. We found him sitting down to the tea-table, garnished by a cold round of beef, and a bottle of cider. The children sat on either side, Miny at the head, and the mother lying upon a sofa beside the open window.

I have described the scene simply for this reason, that it has been indelibly impressed upon my memory, and it was the last touch of domestic life I saw in England.

"Well, Martin," said the doctor, after shaking hands, &c. was over, and I was seated beside Mrs. Millard's sofa, "so you've passed the rubicon, and are virtually a colonist. Do you know, boy, if it were not for family reasons I'd gladly go with you? I believe it's one of the finest climates in the world. Upon my word, rector, we might all do worse than go out there. What have we to care for here except our children, and they can go with us?"

The rector shook his head and smiled.
“We ought to be content with the position
God has placed us in, doctor.”

“Then, by Jove! poor Martin’s a sinner;
he’s not content. Now, in plain English,
should we ever colonise a country if we
were to sit down in our pulpits, or desks, or
dispensaries, and say, ‘here I sit until death
removes me?’ ”

“I don’t mean that,” said Mr. Cary; “but
I mean that some of us have our duty too
plainly marked out to avoid seeing it. For
instance, here are we; you have the care of
the health of the parish, I have the care of
their souls. We both see what we should do,
and find we have enough, and more, too,
than we can do properly. We do not want
money, therefore why quarrel with what we
have?—why leave the people committed to
our charge to the mercies of a stranger?
Martin is young; he has no duties or ties

except of friendship, and the world is open to him. I think he is right to choose as he has done, and I hope I shall live to find my hopes realized."

Mrs. Millard's hand had stolen into mine as the rector spoke, and grasping it closely, she whispered so low that the words only reached my ears, "Do not be disheartened, Martin; she shall be your helpmate, if you rough the first alone."

I knew from this that Miny had told her mother what had passed between us, and these few words braced me to face any difficulty. I looked at her as she sat in the twilight; I could not discern her eyes, but I knew she was looking towards me.

"Miny," said her mother, "come here, darling." She came over and stood beside the couch. The doctor and rector were disputing as to the responsible positions of men. The children gathered in another window

talking among themselves ; thus we three were alone. The dim twilight showed me my darling's face, pale and sad ; the bright drops quietly but irrepressibly falling one by one.

" Martin," whispered Mrs. Millard, " she loves you, and I know you love her. I will watch over her for you, and with God's blessing you will meet to part only in death. Hush, my boy ! God's will is best. You are going upon a glorious course. Remember, that ' to whom much is given, of them much will be required.' "

Miny sat down by my side, her hand in mine, and for some time neither of us spoke. At last Mrs. Millard broke the silence.

" Go now, Martin ; Miny will say ' good-bye ' at the gate. Poor children ! you are only prolonging the evil hour ! "

I rose. Mr. Cary had been watching for this, and rose too, and we bid them farewell,

all but Miny, who had disappeared. The rector had heard more than I thought, and saying, "I'll walk alone, my boy," left me at the gate; and there I parted from my darling.

Our parting was tearless; it had (I knew afterwards) all the solemnity of death, and when the first overwhelming blow comes tears are crushed back; they only come afterward, as a merciful dispensation to relieve the sinking soul. It is when tears are denied that madness or a broken heart follows the loss of all we loved.

The moon rose slowly but cloudless, and I still leant against the gate, holding her there. I saw her dear face in the pure and holy light, pale but calm—almost like a face after life has passed away. I said the parting word—I kissed her—a long, last kiss—and then fled along the path, fearing to look back, lest I should not have resolution to leave her.

My nearest way lay through the churchyard, and, as I half expected, I found Mr. Cary standing by my mother's grave. He knew I should visit it last.

The reader may imagine I did not sleep much upon this my last night at Slyndhurst. I was busy packing until the grey dawn broke in upon me, and had just put in the last buckle when the rector knocked gently at the door.

"Ah, Martin! up and ready," he said with affected cheerfulness; "I hoped to find you asleep, my boy; but we have not much time, the mail will pass in half an hour, and it is ill travelling on an empty stomach, either for the mind or body, and you require the strength of both." So saying, he took my arm, and led me down stairs to the study, where a snug little breakfast lay ready, with a bright fire gleaming in the grate. He saw me looking round, and guessed my thoughts.

"You'll remember it, boy; it's a pleasant memory to carry away with one, the warm hearth of an English fireside, but you'll rear a warmer and brighter for yourself. Depend upon it, there's no home so precious as one built up by our own work, whether the head or hand labour. You'll know this soon, Martin, and will think of my words when I am at rest."

The idea of a home of my own brought Miny's image before me; not that I had forgotten her, indeed; but for many months she had become such a regular attendant upon each plan, that I did not always see the exact connection one with the other. Now, however, I knew that my only home would be one brightened by her presence. I had not spoken of my love, and the very thought of it sent the blood rushing to my face.

"Oh, Mr. Cary!" I began, "I have one thing more to tell you about Miny."

"I know, I know, Martin, and a better choice no man could have made. She is a true-hearted honest woman, one who has the love of God ever in her heart, and is not ashamed to own it. Ah, Martin! I saw what was going on, but I knew such things were beyond man's control. You have a noble prize to work for, boy, and a priceless love to urge you on. Believe me, Martin, there is no earthly blessing so great as that of the love of a pure and holy heart; no sacrifice is too great to gain it, no exertion too great to secure it, and, God knows, no pains too great to keep it. Aye—and, Martin, remember this, that it is the duty of the stronger to protect the weaker. Never let her be without your care and sheltering arm, once she is given into your keeping. Guide her, guard her, and spare her. Pity her faults, if she has such, (and who has not?) but mercifully remember she has only you to look to; and

that if harshness or neglect drive back her loving confidence, temptation finds a holding-place; and, once gained, God only knows when or how comes the rest."

Mr. Cary's eyes were full of tears when he ceased speaking. I knew he was reading me a lesson from his own life and experience; and the consciousness that I knew more than he thought of the past he dated that experience from, kept me abashed and silent; and it was not until I was many miles upon my way that I could think calmly upon the value of his parting advice.

The last thing I had seen at Slyndhurst was the red roof and gable end of the doctor's house. The window was open, and a hand moved from it. I knew it was Miny's, though we went too fast and the light was too uncertain to distinguish accurately; yet the thought, that this was the last object in my remembrance of the village, acted as a

sort of comfort, and covering my face, determined to see nothing more until we were far beyond any spot I knew, or associated with the past.

Twenty years ago appointments and conveniences of emigrant ships were upon a much lower scale than at the present day, and though infinitely superior to those belonging to foreign ports, were still very far from what the most moderate of us would call a desirable place to spend three months in. The vessel in which I had taken my passage was completely filled; every hole and corner occupied by human or other cargo. In the cabin we had only three ladies (and happily they were really ladies), but in the steerage two-thirds were women; and a more disorderly, riotous lot, I am thankful to say, I have never seen elsewhere. It seems they had been shipped off by a society in London, who hearing of the want of female domestics in Australia,

and anxious to clear out a few of the metropolitan workhouses, raised a subscription to pay the passage money and provide fitting clothing, furnishing each with a certificate of character, and a note authorizing them to receive a small weekly allowance for the first month after their arrival ; during which time the sanguine directors of this *humane* society fondly imagined these exemplary daughters of Eve would become respectable domestics in colonial houses. Unfortunately no responsible person was sent out with them, or sufficient care taken to secure them sufficient protection on landing ; and yet the most virtuous horror was expressed when the report came back, that scarcely one of their emigrants had entered upon a respectable life, the few who had withstood the force of evil example and temptation on board, falling a prey to the overwhelming temptation that surrounded them on landing. It was in vain for the

captain to attempt anything like order below ; but on deck he certainly kept up a show of respectability. At first the ladies volunteered their help, and started a sewing school, one reading aloud during the time. The novelty pleased, and for a week the greater part of the women attended regularly, gradually dropping off one by one, until about half-a-dozen young girls, principally the daughters of country emigrants, were the sole attendants. These poor girls, I firmly believe, owed their characters and every blessing of their after life to the influence of the quiet hours spent at the sewing-school.

I had supplied myself with several works upon New Zealand, and found ample occupation.

We had a tolerably fair passage, and, excepting one death and three births, nothing particular occurred to break the monotony of

the voyage. And heartily glad was I to set foot on "terra firma" again, and escape the dull routine of eating, drinking, and sleeping, which I had been undergoing for nearly ten weeks. Sydney I found much as I expected; and presenting by no means a promising prospect in the way of society. I saw nothing of the country, as by great good luck I found a vessel on the point of sailing for Coromandel, to collect spars of the *Kauri* pine; and as she set out two days after my arrival, I had hard work enough to get my luggage out and re-shipped without any sight-seeing. Nor did I regret it much, as I was jealous that all my first impressions of a colony should be drawn from my adopted land; and I had just seen enough of Sydney to make me wish I had seen nothing.

If the weather had proved propitious before, it certainly vented its suppressed spleen upon

us in what ought to have been a fortnight's run at the most. Blowing was no name for it, it *tore* and raved, coming in regular hurricanes over a calm sea. Often the waves sinking in a peculiar manner, and to a fanciful mind wearing an abashed and suppliant look. Day after day we beat hopelessly about, making but little way in the lulls; then down came the blast, and we lay rolling helplessly. I had never been sea-sick after the first day or two on my outward voyage, but now I was regularly prostrated, and became so ill and weak, that I at last imagined I never should reach the island at all, and actually began a letter to Mr. Cary, telling him what I felt about it. Happily the wind spent its fury, and shifting into a favourable quarter, soon brought us within sight of land; and the rocky outline of Cape Farewell welcomed us to New Zealand.

After the blowing about we had had, every

one was desirous of a temporary rest, and after a little affected opposition, the captain agreed to anchor in Blind Bay; so that my first view of the country was from the same point as that of its discoverer, Abel Jausen Tasman, who, according to historians, anchored in this same bay, upon the 13th November, 1642, having first sighted some portion of the southwest, and the same island now known as the middle.

CHAPTER III.

BLIND BAY, AND TRACINGS OF AN OLD FRIEND.

I do not think any hour of my life is so vividly impressed upon my memory as that occupied in passing into and up Blind Bay. Do you wonder that it should be so? Remember that the land I looked upon was the realization of my dreams, the home I had chosen out of the whole wide world; and as if to add all the brightness she could to my hopes, dame nature granted me a day of balmy sunshine, such as I never saw excelled during all my sojourn in this land of soft air and cloudless skies. Not that in this case the sky was

cloudless. In my opinion half the beauty of summer days consist in the heavenly landscape of clouds, and a sky without clouds is like a lovely face without expression.

After passing the mouth of Massacre Bay with its long tusk-like jet of land that forms it into a bay, and which might be conceived to be the eye-tooth of one of the unhappy chiefs who so wantonly devoured the poor fat Dutchman, the view landways became every moment more enchanting.

Before us the distant horizon, forming the south end of the bay, appeared a mere hazy belt of blueish clouds, along which a heavy wall of those we are wont to call woolpacks were slowly rolling along, having a sort of dazzling inner light which I never remarked elsewhere except in New Zealand, and on one or two occasions in Canada. On the east the bay was belted by a stupendous ridge of mountains, their peaked and broken outline

showing their rocky formation ; while on the west a belt of sand was joined by a forest sloping up into the horizon. I had pictured to myself, what I supposed the much-lauded green of one of the primeval forests must be, but the reality exceeded anything I had formed the faintest conception of. You absolutely felt the colour ; every sense was enraptured, as it were, and a passionate longing arose to throw yourself into its depths, and lie for ever in its cool luxurious arms.

As we sailed slowly up the bay, I gazed with eager eyes upon this scene of enchantment. A year ago I had revelled in the summer tints of the New Forest, and lain for hours happy to gaze upon the undulating mass of oak and elm, which I had fondly imagined could not be surpassed by any land ; but now the vision of the past was immeasurably exceeded. Strange to say, it came back to me in that first view of the

new land, as clearly as if I had gazed upon it but an hour before. It was as if I saw it through this wondrous curtain. There it lay; the heath with its golden sea of gorse, whose waves rolled up to kiss the fern and wild roses that clustered round the border of the forest. Then the miles and miles of rich green, rising and falling in light and shade, until the hot mist of summer shaded it off, blending earth and sky in one soft light. For a few minutes the old place laid thus before my mind's eye; then faded slowly away, lost in the surpassing beauty of the glowing land before me; and from that moment, I never could recall it, even though, in the darkness of night, I have summoned every power of memory, every association to bring back those features, as I had known them in the past; they were obliterated for ever. And England, my boyhood and the first impressions of my

life became a sweet but dreamy memory, swallowed up and lost in the fair presence of her I loved with all the faith of a first love.

Gradually, as we pursued our way, the end of the bay became visible; but while we were yet some distance off, a ridge of rock and sand rising before us rendered it prudent to drop anchor. So, as I said before, we remained in the open water, and it was in a small boat I made my first entrance into what was afterwards Nelson Harbour.

The captain, although he had made two previous voyages to the east coast, had never explored this harbour before; and having an eye to the future, he was soon in a state of delirious delight at the capabilities of the dock-like basin before us; and held forth upon its future prosperity, in what turned out to be a truly prophetic manner.

We landed near the mouth of the Wai-

moa, a considerable stream that came laughing and singing out of the arms of the forest, and dividing into several streams, flowed clear as crystal across a belt of hard white sand. As the boat ran high on the shore, with a wild thrill of delight, I sprang on the sand, and gave a cheer for the new land. The cheer was instantly caught up and echoed by the captain and crew. My next move was to dip my head in the cool water of the Waimoa. Never did nectar send a more impassioned glow through the veins of the gods, than that long pure draught did through mine. Oh ! ye imbibers of ale and wine, stout and strong drinks, little do ye know the ecstasy of a draught of the liquid ye despise, may give after a three months' experience of preserved water, beer and the like. I am convinced Father Matthew must have taken a voyage in an emigrant ship, to give him such enthu-

siasm in the water question ; and that if he had only been able to give his most obdurate opponents the benefit of an experience like mine, he would have tea—or rather water—totalized the entire kingdom.

The captain's burst of enthusiasm soon wore off, and he began to think of business again, the first operation being to fill the water-casks. This he deputed to one of the mates, while he, with another, a few of the crew, and myself, armed with our guns, and a short supply of provisions, set off upon an exploring walk, taking a direct line to the south-east, where, beyond a low ridge of grassy hills, we saw a magnificent mountain range covered to all appearance with forest.

We had been rather surprised at finding no traces of the natives near the bay ; for though it was said that very few remained in this portion of the south island, the spot was so prepared by nature itself as a habitation,

that it appeared to us if a native existed we should have met with them there. I did not know until afterwards of the war that had been raging, and that the lovely spot I had first set foot on had been the scene of one of their bloodiest battles and feasts; so quickly does the growth of vegetation go on, as if nature threw a veil over the deeds of horror to which she was a passive spectator. But in my after-experience I have frequently seen the ground trodden and blood-stained, the uprooted grass and stones burnt with the fire that cooked their diabolical feasts, and returning to the same spot in a few weeks, found it covered with a fresh garment, even richer than before, the blackened stones robed in lovely mosses, and every hillock blooming with flowers.

The first portion of our walk was easy enough, the only difficulty that presented itself consisting in the high fern through

which we had to push our way knee deep. Upon gaining the summit of the ridge there lay before us, westward, a magnificent plain, bounded by mountains and intersected by wide valleys, the whole view basking in the never-fading green, the rich colour relieved by the varieties of the foliage, broken in upon at times by treeless plains, or large swamps covered by the flax-plant.

We slept under the shelter of a koke-koke tree, and just upon the verge of the forest, not liking to trust ourselves within its depths in the evening. An intense dew fell in the night, but, though wet to the skin and being upon an impromptu bed of fern, I awoke without a pain or ache, and not a shadow of my English companion, a cold in the head.

My waking was singular enough and characteristic of the country. The captain just

before I fell asleep, had been remarking on the scarcity of birds ; and the conversation had turned upon the assertion made by Captain Cook, that the song of the birds had sounded like "joy-peals of a church, only of infinitely greater numbers."

These words were, I think, the last that rang in my ears when, tired and sleepy, I rolled myself up upon the ferns, and was soon dreaming of the friends I had left behind, and, as the reader may suppose, of Miny in particular. In my dream I thought we walked up to the quaint old church, and stood before the altar ; then, with that strange inconsistency of a vision, I knew it was not I, but another that had taken my rightful place. I could not see who, and I was bending forward to catch a glimpse of his face, when the marriage bells began to chime, and starting up, I heard the very air ringing with the voices of birds,—above, behind, all

around, fluttering among the branches, or clustering among the plants which formed an impenetrable-looking underwood. I held my breath and listened, almost doubting whether the enchanting music was not part of my dream. Perfectly reckless of all save their morning hymn of praise, the minstrels came nearer, sometimes within arms' length. Ever and anon some little creature would flutter down beside one of my sleeping companions, and hop inquiringly round and round him; then with a trill of song, mount up to its perch among the others, and add its voice to the chorus. One bird, a funny little fellow, with a brown coat and white breast, performed the most marvellous antics. He would stop suddenly in his song, and throwing himself off the branch, turn two or three somersaults, scattering his friends here and there, then regaining his original place, set to work, mimicking first

one and then another, once or twice laughing in such a human-like voice, that I could scarcely believe it was not in reality some of the men who, like myself, was an amused hearer and witness to the concert and pantomime.

I was still gazing at my clever little "harlequin," when I saw a face appear immediately before mine. It was thrust cautiously forward for a moment, then disappeared behind the foliage of the bush, so quickly, that even had not a second thought convinced me of the imprudence, I had not time to put my impulse of springing up into execution, but the glance, short as it had been, had been sufficient to let me see the "tattoo" marks.

I cannot say whether I was actually alarmed, and I am not superstitious ; but still, the shadowy, weird-like manner he had come upon me, added to the darkness of the forest

around, and the magical melody filling the death-like stillness of the morning air, heavy with a new and almost overpowering perfume, altogether invested the vision with something verging upon the spiritual. The blood throbbed in my pulses, and my eye-balls ached with the intensity with which I gazed into the dark-green vault. A long time—an age, it seemed to me—passed; the sun mounted higher, the shadows of a few single trees became clearly defined, the song of the birds ceased, and they themselves nearly all disappeared. Still I lay, my eyes riveted upon the one particular spot. I had a presentiment he would come again; my only fear being lest my companions should awaken in the meantime, and rob me of some wild and mysterious adventure.

Presently, and at almost the despairing point, the branches parted, and the face again looked out, took a wary, careful survey, then

a hand and arm appeared, the boughs were pushed aside, and a naked savage stepped boldly but with the foot-fall of a tiger forward. I had seen a couple of New Zealand sailors at Sydney, but they were mere pigmies compared to this man, who stood in a stream of sunshine, erect as an arrow, every muscle developed, and every limb moulded by exercise and action, difficult, indeed, would it have been to find his compeer, impossible to surpass him in natural beauty.

His whole body, the skin of which was by no means of the dark shade I pictured to myself from the accounts I had read, was marked with strange hieroglyphical tattooed figures, many of them as sharply lined and clear as an engraving; a broad painted and embroidered belt was round his middle, from which a skin apron descended before and behind, and into the belt a large pistol and a knife were stuck, while in his hand he held

a strange-looking native weapon, something like an axe, the head made of a stone resembling green agate ; his hair was tied in three knobs upon the top of his head, each ornamented with scarlet feathers, while in his ears were placed bunches of the snowwhite downy feather of a Gannet, counted a great prize, as he glided from the forest and stood by one of the sleepers, the even, regular motion of his foot resembling the "pad," "pad," of a cat. Passing on from one to another, as some conspicuous garment attracted his attention, once or twice he stooped and rubbed his fingers along the object of curiosity, and once he seemed inclined to appropriate it ; but the sleeper moved and he started back.

As yet I had escaped notice ; but having inspected the rest, he took me in turn. As he turned, I cannot say I felt altogether comfortable. He had spared the sleepers, but if

he found me awake, might he not practise a different mode ; and finishing me off first, do the like to the others at his leisure. Thinking all this in an incredible short space, I determined to take the safest plan, and affect sleep ; sleeping with one eye open, as it were, and ready to take advantage of the first murderous movement on his part. So softly did he approach, that though I was listening with every nerve on the alert, I could not have told he was beside me, until I felt his warm breath upon my hand, where I suppose a ring of my mother's which I wore, had attracted his attention. Upon the same hand I had many years before made an elaborate drawing of a ship and anchor, performing my artistic feat with gunpowder and a pin, assisted therein by a sailor with whom I had struck up, for the time being, a great friendship, and who particularly excited my admiration by the different objects depicted upon his skin. No

sooner did the native's eyes fall upon the mark, than in spite of his caution, he uttered a low note of surprise, and startled from my equanimity by the half growl, I opened my eyes.

Quick as lightning he was on his feet, and, grasping both knife and axe, stood ready, though by a furtive glance he cast at the thicket, evidently undecided whether to do battle or fly.

His attitude was splendid; and from the low position I was in, he looked more like a colossal statue than a human being. Then came the thought of my own frame in comparison, and an involuntary laugh broke from my lips as I thought of the odds against me.

The laugh acted like magic. The savage dropped both arms, gazed at me with a long puzzled look and laughed too, a low, soft, musical laugh; then coming close to me he

sat down pointing first to my hand then his own, upon which I must say I was not a little surprised to see a drawing exactly matching my own, even to the initial "T. B." in the mainsail of the queer looking ship. There could be no mistake: my old friend must have been employing his pencil among the New Zealanders; and my conjecture became certainty when the native pointing toward the sea whispered "Pakeha Tomiha."

Now being aware of Pakeha being the term applied to Europeans, and "Tom" being the christian name of Mr. Bell, in the words he would have used on a similar occasion, I "put two and two together," and arrived at the conclusion that by a freak of fortune I had actually stumbled upon a friend of Tom's, if I was not in the vicinity of Tom himself. All fear of my new acquaintance had now vanished, and we sat smiling and looking at each other in the most friendly manner, neither

speaking, however, having I suppose a mutual desire to improve our acquaintance before the rest of the party awoke.

The "tattoo" marks afforded me ample employment for my visual organs, while my dress seemed to act in a similar manner. I had a coloured silk pocket-handkerchief in my pocket; this I bethought me might prove a seal to our alliance, so taking it out, I presented it, and the intense expression of delight that beamed in his face, was a ready witness to the good policy of my action.

Opening it he examined it all over, ran his finger along the scrolls; then pointing to my neck-tie made me understand he wished to wear it in a similar fashion. I tied it round his bronzed and muscular throat, where it presented a rather incongruous appearance, considering the extreme *airiness* of the rest of his attire.

I had scarcely finished his toilet, when a

shout from the captain startled us. Looking round I saw him sitting bolt upright, rubbing his eyes and staring at us as if he had seen a party of ghosts.

I burst into a loud laugh at the absurdity of the scene that met his waking senses. There was I sitting cheek by jowl with a naked Maori, to whom I was performing the delicate duties of lady's maid, or valet; and I should say grinning at each other all the time like two Cheshire cats; though why that cheese-renowned country should have the credit of producing a distinct breed of cats, I never could understand.

The captain's exclamation and my laughter banished the god of slumber, and we were all soon on our legs, the men clustering round the stranger, who seemed rather to like their rough curiosity, while I told the captain my little adventure.

CHAPTER IV.

MY FIRST SIGHT OF A NATIVE PAH.

WE found our new friend could speak very intelligible broken English, amusingly interlaced with seafaring slang terms, picked up among the whalers, with whom he had spent many days of his life. He was, it appeared, a chief of the race driven from their possessions, and almost annihilated by E. Rauparaha. He had fought, he assured us, hand to hand with the great chief himself, and been left for dead upon the field of battle, only escaping the oven

by so far regaining his strength as to crawl into a flax bush. From his concealment he had seen the conquerors' feast; and when they had eaten themselves drowsy, and were asleep, he stole out of his hiding-place, purloining a remnant of the flesh, upon which he subsisted until his wounds healed, and the enemy had disappeared. He was about to go in search of his friends, when he heard the war-cry again, and unable to resist the impulse, weak and ill as he must have been, tried to reach the place. As he staggered, rather than walked, through the forest, stopping continually to take breath and listen to the shouts, he met a beautiful young girl, dressed as a chieftainess of the race with whom he was at war.

"Where are you going?" she asked, standing in the pathway, so that he could not pass.

"To my people," he replied. "I am

Okinga, a chief of the Raugitani. They are devoured by the great Rauparaha."

"Stay, Okinga. Rauparaha is my father," said the maiden. "He will slay you; you are weak, your limbs are quivering like the tender grass, when the storm breath is passing. You have not time to go; stay here, and rest; I will bring you food."

So Okinga remained, spellbound by the voice of the maiden, who vanished like a sunbeam, and all was silent, save the distant battle. Soon that too died away, and darkness fell. Then Okinga began to long for the maiden's return, but she came not. Hour after hour stole away, and not a step broke the silence; so Okinga grew weary, and in spite of hunger he slept. His sleep was broken by a low sweet voice, and looking up he saw the indistinct outline of a female whom from some feathers she wore, he knew to be Rauparaha's daughter. She

put a gourd to his lips and a cake of sweet potatoes in his hand, and then sitting down bid him eat quickly. When he had eaten, she told him the war party had gone across the river, meaning the Pelorus, and that the women and priests only were left; but more, she told him that she loved him, and that if he would follow her advice, and be friends with her tribe, he should be a chief, and her husband. But Okinga could not, even for her sake, do this, and so the maiden left him.

Next day, however, an old priest came, and reasoned with him, but still to no effect. Okinga's love was dear, though his honour was dearer; but in the end true love triumphed; the maiden left her people to share the lot of her lover.

After telling us this romantic story, Okinga offered to act as guide to the whaling station in Cloudy Bay, which, he stated, was not many

days' walk. This, however, the captain did not agree to, having left his crew in a state of uncertainty; his determination to return would have ruined any chance I had of embracing the native's offer, had he not offered to call at the whaling station to pick me up, on condition that if I was not there within twenty-four hours after the arrival of the ship, he might proceed without me.

It was with rather peculiar a sensation, I must say, that I saw my comrades disappear, and felt that I was alone with a savage, in his native forests. I think he guessed something of my thoughts; for he took the knife and pistol out of his belt and put them in my hands, so half blushing at my want of trust, I gave them back, and by doing so cemented our friendship more closely than a hundred words could have done.

Our road lay through the heart of a forest composed of many different sorts of trees, all

of a gigantic size. The undergrowth was in many parts totally impenetrable, the long lithe branches of a creeper, called Supple Jack, spreading a regular network, while the tough hard rata barred the way in other parts. We had deviated from the path, if any there really was, and had to push and cleave our way step by step, using our hands and knives alternately. The ground underfoot, too, was damp and slippery, and many a sharp fall I got by reason of the wet slimy roots which interlaced the surface of the ground. The air, too, was hot and oppressive; but in spite of all these drawbacks, there was an indescribable charm in this primeval work of nature, probably never visited by a European before, and my old boyish love of adventure was now for the first time being gratified. Stories of American forests, that I had read long ago, rose in my memory; and with them, too, the tone of my mother's voice, as she either read or talked to me about them.

I was startled from these thoughts by Okinga uttering a high sharp note, resembling the cry of the curlew. Seeing my surprise he laughed, saying, "It is to tell Kara a Pakeha is coming." This was the first hint he had given me that his wife was near, and I asked him why he had not done so before?

The blood rushed to his face, and an angry frown to his forehead, as, glancing suspiciously at me, he answered—

"Kara is fair as the snow on the mountains, she is sweet as the breath of the summer breeze. Does the Pakeha know now why Okinga concealed his flower?"

"Then I shall vex you by going to your home, perhaps," I said.

"No, no!" exclaimed the native vehemently. "Martinera is a raugaturah (chief), he will not betray Okinga; see, there is the pah."

Looking in the direction indicated, I saw blue smoke curling lazily up above a dense thicket of green, but, excepting this, no sign of habitation. Presently, however, as we drew nearer, I could distinguish strange-looking objects rising among the trees ; and in a few minutes, found myself within eyesight of the outer fence. It was entirely warped with green boughs, principally those of the fern tree ; and, even at the short distance I first saw it at, could not be clearly distinguished from the forest, looking more like an enormous natural green basket than anything artificial. Okinga laughed as I told him, and explained that the green was renewed constantly, and was a precautionary measure to avoid attracting the attention of any of the Nga-te-toa tribe. When within a couple of hundred yards of the pah, my companion darted out of sight among a cluster of thick fern, returning with a large square shawl in his hand. This was

his "tonga," or rug, and had been hidden there when he departed the previous night upon his outpost duty. Now, with a smile, he draped it gracefully round him, and walking just before me, gave me an opportunity of inspecting and admiring it. The material was the fibre of the flax plant, glossy and soft as silk, closely and regularly woven, of a yellowish white. The border, alone coloured, bore a strong resemblance to the old Roman patterns. It was composed of a brilliant orange, a dull blue, and brick-dust sort of red, painted upon the surface, and only in chance places showing on the other side, though I saw many afterwards painted carefully on both.

Following Okinga up a slight embankment, I saw an opening in the green wall, inside which he vanished. Fearful of losing sight of his reception, I hurried on, and it seemed lucky I did, for within, fence after fence to the depth of at least half-a-dozen, presented a

perfect labyrinth, the openings being so arranged as to lead you from side to side, each doorway opening, to all appearance, into a long narrow path between fences. At last, "the gate was won," and a sight presented itself I shall certainly fail as completely to picture to my readers, as I shall to erase from my memory.

The enclosure was an irregular circle, containing, I suppose, some five or six acres; the trees and bushes had been cleared away, leaving a smooth, level surface of short, mossy grass. In the middle was the chief's state dwelling, about eight feet high and twenty or thirty long; the front, which faced me, seemed richly carved, and painted blood-red; directly above the door perched a grotesque figure, in the lap of which grinned a carved human head; behind and at either side of this dwelling lay heaps of sticks and rushes, from three or four of which smoke was

rising; while natives reclined on or round in every attitude; there was a strange, thick haze in the air, which at first, added to the novelty, prevented me fully comprehending the sight; and I was still standing wondering at the intense silence and immovability of the natives, when a yell, such as the lips can only utter once in a life-time, rang through the air, and Okinga, with the face and gesture of a madman, dashed forward, but before he could reach the centre dwelling, the crack of a rifle close behind me, rang his death knell.

At the moment the chief fell, a dozen of the natives sprang to their feet, and with yells like demons, rushed forward, but catching sight of me, instantly stopped. Scarcely knowing what I did, I ran forward and raised Okinga's head. The bullet had entered just above the right ear, and the life-blood was gushing from the wound, that last look of

horror now fixed for ever upon his handsome features. I put my hand upon his heart, but it was still; and with a cold sickening feeling, I laid the body gently back. I had never witnessed a death by violence before, and as I staggered to my feet, everything swam in a haze of blood. At least, so it seemed. But what was fancy, soon became the horrible truth. The red of the dwelling, that which I had supposed paint, was actually blood; the carved head a human one, still dripping blood, and the explanation was this:

During Okinga's absence a war party of Nga-te-toa had discovered the pah, and surprising the sleeping inmates, murdered or captured every one, and retiring, left an ambush to finish their diabolical work by murdering Okinga on his return, every precaution being taken to prevent a warning.

The appearance of a white man in his com-

pany at first alarmed them, the natural conclusion being that there were others following, but seeing I was alone, they gained courage, and began telling me I need not fear them, that they were brothers of the Pakeha. I listened to them as they pushed forward one after another, eager to convince me; and, as it seemed, more afraid of me than I was of them, even attempting to excuse the scene, and soften away their crime by telling me that they were attacked, and that Okinga was a bad man, &c., though each altered the story to suit his peculiar ideas of justice, or what he imagined a Pakeha's sense of justice; I turned from them with loathing and contempt, but thankful that they feared me, and determined to take every advantage of it that presented itself.

I found they were very desirous that I should accompany them to the place they

affirmed Rauparaha was waiting, though from some things they let escape I made up my mind the great chief was not near at all, and had not authorized the slaughter I had witnessed. So, seeing I must keep up my position by boldness, I told them I knew they were liars and outcasts, and that Rauparaha would cut off all their heads if he caught them; moreover, if they did not deliver up the wife of Okinga to me, and guide me safe to the station at Cloudy Bay, I would bring Rauparaha and the English upon them, and shoot every one.

The threat, reckless as it was, had a wonderful effect; they shrank back whispering and gesticulating among themselves. Then one ran into a distant hut, and led out a woman with her arms tightly bound, and a rough stick tied across her mouth as a gag. Directly she saw the body of Okinga she broke from her captors, and rushing for-

ward, threw herself upon it, writhing in her agony.

With a trembling hand had I cut the string fastening the gag, but it was too late; the burst of grief had broken her heart, and with a few convulsive quiverings she was dead. Nor could I feel sorry; it was the most merciful fate she could have met.

The reader must not think I have at all embellished or given a higher colouring to the events I have narrated. It is over thirty years ago now since they happened; and many surpassing them in actual atrocity have taken place in my sight since, still, they were the first evidence I saw of the native character and warfare.

I have no wish to harrow the feelings of those who may be good enough to feel interested in my life, nor shall I willingly bring anything on the stage unnecessarily; but I must warn him that if he fol-

lows me through the twenty-three years of my life among the New Zealanders, he must frequently meet with adventures and scenes that will shock him, though I hope I shall be able to interest him all the more in the improvement and future of the people I shall bring before him.

According to my civilized ideas of decency for the dead, I insisted upon seeing the bodies of the chief and his wife buried; and remembering I had read that the house once occupied by a chief was sacred, never destroyed, and allowed to moulder and ruin as it stands, I made them hollow out a grave in the centre of the floor, and put into it the bodies of Okinga and his ill-fated wife. I then closed the door, tying it with a piece of whipcord I had in my pocket, which operation the bystanders considered a religious rite, and I heard them saying the place was "tabood," that is to say, rendered sacred.

I then requested them to give me the guide, as I was determined not to stay longer with liars and murderers. Nor did they seem particularly anxious to keep me, and only waited to bargain what price I would give my guide. Having arranged this, one of them stepped forward, and with one glance round the pah, I followed, glad to get away from the sickening smell and sight of blood.

We immediately struck into the forest, my guide walking first, with a sullen look I by no means admired; but having taken particular notice that he wore no arms, while I was well supplied with those necessary articles, a good rifle, a brace of pistols, and a large knife, something of the shape, when open, of a Highland dirk, I began to gain confidence, and found occupation enough in keeping up with him.

The path presented no difficulties; it was evidently one often trodden, and led up a

steep mountain, a great part of the way close beside a stream, now pouring over precipitous rocks in a long white stream, now almost hidden by plants and moss, and now gurgling pleasantly through a stony track. In some places, where the forest was less dense or broken in upon by a swamp, I saw numbers of bright-plumaged birds, one or two sorts of which were of the parrot tribe, and flew from branch to branch with shrill, unearthly screams ; sometimes I could almost have caught one in my hand, as they evidently had no fear of man, and scarcely deigned to get out of my way. Once or twice I raised my rifle to bring one down, but relented again ; the ring of the bullet as it sang past my ear on its death-warrant to poor Okinga was too fresh to allow me to contemplate firing off my piece without a shudder, so the parrots flew by me unharmed.

After nearly three hours' hard walking and continually ascending, I began to feel both hungry and weary, and for the first time contemplated an attempt at conversation with my taciturn guide, who had been striding on before me without once looking to the right or left. On any other occasion, I should have wearied of this ; but the exciting events of the morning, combined with the interest of every step of the path, made the respite welcome, and I began at length to feel grateful for the silent disposition of my companion.

On reaching a part where a slight opening permitted a glimpse of the blue sky, and an inquisitive sunbeam to peep into the green mystery concealed by the thick foliage, I sat down, and called upon the native to stop too. He did so, and placing himself upon the root of a tree, sat looking fixedly in my face. For a minute or two I was inclined to laugh at the grotesque expression of curiosity and wonder

depicted on his ugly face ; but at last, the fixed stare grew tiresome, and a strange feeling of discomfort and apprehension stole over me. In vain I turned away and munched my biscuit : I was mesmerised by the great eyes glaring at me from a scarred and disfigured face, entirely different in feature and appearance from what I had imagined to be that of a New Zealander.

At last, having finished a couple of biscuits—all I dare allow myself out of my small stock—and taken a draught out of the sparkling brook, I leant back to enjoy a rest, and collect my thoughts before starting again. I tried not to look in the direction of my guide, but it was of use : my eyes wandered back in spite of me. There he sat, his elbows resting on his knees, his chin supported by his hands, and his eyes wide open gazing intently on mine. I could not stand it any longer ; there was a tingling sensation in every nerve, and, almost involun-

involuntarily, I exclaimed, as I seized my rifle—

“By G—d, if you look at me that way I’ll fire at you, whatever you are.”

A tremendous peal of laughter broke from the man as he rolled over, absolutely kicking with delight; and to my horror, lay writhing and roaring like one possessed.

CHAPTER V.

A SURPRISE—AND A FOREST BIVOUAC.

STARTING up, I held my rifle ready, and tried to make up my mind what was the best course to pursue with a madman; for that the natives had purposely played me such a trick, seemed too evident.

“O Lord! O Lord!” I heard the guide ejaculate, as he tumbled about; “to think he did not know me! O Lord! O Lord!”

I was more perplexed than ever. The voice had the familiar twang of my own country in

it. Besides, I fancied something, too, that reminded me of the past ; but still, so many strange occurrences had already taken place, that although I felt as if nothing would really be impossible, I was conscious that my brain was so excited and confused, that every trivial event assumed a degree of undue magnitude.

The only intelligible expression that reached me was what I have recorded, varied by peals of laughter. At last, having fairly exhausted himself, the echoes of his voice, loud at first, died away, until a low guttural growl now and then was the only result. He rose up, and wiping his eyes with the corner of his mat, sat shaking and groaning upon the bank.

Presently looking up, he said, "O Lord, Master Martin ! don't ye remember me ? O Lord ! to think of coming upon him among the savages and man-eaters !" and off my

friend went into one of his fits of merriment.

“Who on earth are you, or who do you take me for?” I asked, wondering more and more, and fearful to trust the very improbable supposition that stole in upon my senses.

“Who am I? O Lord! who should I be but Tom Bell? And who are you? O Lord! O Lord! to hear the boy a-askin’ his own name!”

A dull comprehension of the truth began to steal upon me, though still wrapt in mystery and doubt. Was it actually possible that I should have stumbled on my old friend in such a dress and at such a spot? And had I not had a lively recollection of the mark upon Okinga’s arm, I do not think I would have believed my senses.

“You’re frightened, master, and thinking no end o’ queer things! I’m Tom Bell as

sure as you're Martin Tobin : an' if you doubt my word, I'll tell you all about it."

I could not doubt any longer. Improbable as it seemed, I had no alternative. If I had remembered Tom's face, I might have felt clearer ; but, somehow, I had a notion that Tom was a good-looking man, and the person I saw before me, claiming the name and my acquaintance, was the very opposite.

"I a'n't a beauty now," he said ; "maybe, that's why ye don't recognize me. But I'll tell ye the story bye-and-bye ; only now, Martin, as sure as Heaven's above us, I am Tom Bell, and not one o' them deceitful bloody savages ye thought me ! O Lord ! O Lord !" and off he went into one of his roars.

My doubts had now vanished. The very notion of having a countryman beside me, even though he could look like a native, was a comfort ; and a gush of curiosity and delight rendered me incapable of doing anything but

grasping Tom's hand, as a sense of inexpressible relief stole over me, much the same as one feels on awaking from a terrible nightmare.

'But, Tom, how are you dressed this way, or here at all?' I exclaimed.

"Undressed, you mean, master! O Lord! it's a queer story, but you shall hear it; and hang me if I'll leave you again, that is, in course, if you'll take me."

I laughed.

"Take you, Tom? Why, it's the happiest hour I remember, meeting you, though I can hardly trust it, even yet. You're not a spirit, old fellow?" I asked, laughing.

"O Lord, master! I'm a ghost, a'n't I? No, no! I like spirits, but I don't fancy being one, any how as yet. But come, master, you've a good spell afore you reach the top of the mountain, and then a precious weary walk down; but if ye'll foller me ye'll do it, and

we'll talk while we're restin'. Come along, sir, jest forget I a'n't one o' them bloody savages, and come along." He gave me a merry look, and gathering himself up, marched on before, ever and anon, however, looking back to laugh and say, "O Lord, master!" keeping all the while ahead of me, while I followed busily conjecturing a thousand explanations.

On we toiled, the features of the scenery gradually changing, until the brushwood entirely disappeared, and the bare boles of the trees alone met the eye. These, too, became fewer and fewer, until we stood upon a treeless waste, with the almost perpendicular brow of a hill rising straight before us.

Here Tom stopped, and bidding me rest awhile before we proceeded to breast the rocks before us, lay down beside me. "It was an ugly thing, the pah, master, particular to a

young hand. But," he continued, passing his hand across his eyes as if to wipe away the sight, "it's one of them things we must expect in a land o' savages and man-eaters. I was sorry for them, God help them! but where was the use speaking? The black divils was a-dancing and cutting of them like anythink, and it was all I could do to get them to spare Okinga's wife. Lord bless her! she ran to me, though none of them knew me, and thought me one of their divilish tribes. I would have saved him if I could, but they wouldn't let me out o' sight after she came to me, an' thought I had some knowledge more than they had. Oh! it was cruel to see the poor fellow fall, and then her shriek! She knew his voice when he called out, and when the shot came I believe she knew he was killed, for she fell down like a stone, and never moved till they told her to come to you."

"But how did it come, Tom, that you, who were a friend of Okinga's, should be with his enemies?"

"Ye may well say that, master. The way was this: I wanted to get out o' the way for a while, not liking the state of affairs where I was located, the reasons being my own at present, master, so I dresses up, or rather," he added, with a laugh, "I undresses, and getting away, falls in with a few natives, and thinking them nothing worse nor their neighbours, joins them, making them think I came from Australy, and telling them what my people did. I nearly got made a chief, only they had one. But they thought a deal on me, master, as you may guess when they let me be your guide. Lord! how they'll swear when I doesn't go back!"

"But where were you living before, Tom?"
I asked.

"At Taranaki; it's the loveliest spot in the round world, Martin; an' if you take my advice you'll just run across the Straits and take a line right for the mountain—it's a famous landmark—and there's no fear of losing one's way—if you do, take up a stream and go a-head till you see the white top of the hill again, and you're all right."

"Well, I'll go if you take me, Tom, but not otherwise."

"Then you'll not go at all, master, for I daren't set foot there this ten year."

"Why, Tom?"

"It's an ugly story, master, an' one you'll git no good by hearing, so best leave 't alone. The Scripture says that the 'devil walks about like a roarin' lion.' Well, master, he caught me one day, an' that's the truth. I did somethin' I don't like to think on, let alone converse about, so you'll oblige me by saying no more upon that subject. I'm

your friend, even if I die for it, an' that's enough."

I saw the poor fellow's features working as he spoke, and a big drop course down his rough cheek, so I only grasped his hand, and said what I really felt—

"I'm very sorry for you, Tom, and if you'll stick to me, I'll do my best to keep you straight."

"I believe you, master; and, in my opinion, Providence has thrown us two together for some plan of his own. It's not for nothink you and I have come together in this strange land, an' it's our duty, as I thinks, to run with Providence. I'm not so young as I have been, master; and if I've not grown a bit wiser during the five-and-forty years I've lived, it's a caution."

"Well, Tom, I believe you," I replied, "and, what's more, I trust you. Now, tell me something about Okinga; how did you

come to put this upon him?" and I held up my hand.

Tom changed colour, and looked uncomfortable.

"A bit of a spree, master. He were trying to chaff me about the marks I had; so I said I'd put one on him, that's all. He were a fine-spirited young man, and one deserving better than he got."

"Did you know him well, then?"

"I did, master," was the curt reply, and something in the tone prevented me asking further, though I must say my curiosity was strongly excited.

"We'll go on now, master," said he, suddenly; "the night's comin', and we shall be better in the forest than in these high latitudes."

So saying, he rose, and began scrambling up the almost perpendicular face of the cliff, now and then shouting to me to "look out,"

as some loose stone, dragged out of its bed by his grasp, rolled down. Thus we proceeded, inch by inch, until with torn trowsers and hands bleeding from the rough stones, &c., to which I had to trust for my holding, we reached the summit. Never did a lovelier panorama burst upon the human eye. I literally held my breath with wonder and awe, scarcely crediting my senses that the scene was real.

Immediately below me stretched, or rather sloped, miles and miles of green forest, an almost even carpet of light and dark, broken in a few places by a grey belt of rock, and one long line of a silvery stream. Beyond the forest line was an undulating green champagne, dotted here and there by clumps of trees, and beyond, far away in the distant horizon, the crescent-shaped bay, bound in on either side by brown and grey rocks, just perceptible beyond the opposite shore line the

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high ground and snow-capped mountains of the northern island.

For some minutes I stood speechless, gazing and wondering, overawed by the indescribable magnificence and beauty of the whole. Then my curiosity growing keener, I pulled out my pocket telescope, and began a more minute survey.

The sight of the telescope delighted Tom ; he waited with evident impatience until I had indulged my first feelings, when he begged to be allowed to hold it for a few minutes. And soon I became an interested listener as he named one headland and island after another, sometimes giving me a short account of any event that had rendered them of notoriety.

It was certainly a fairy-like picture, the beauty of which it would be utterly impossible either to describe or draw. No human pen could adequately represent its wondrous

beauty and graceful outline; and what pencil could catch the glorious purity of atmosphere which enables you, by the help of a telescope, to mark the distinct outline of the most distant mountains that bound the horizon, or the ever-varying light and shade passing like spirit smiles over the boundless landscape.

The sun was very low when we reached the top, and seized with a wild wish to see him set, I persuaded Tom to stay, promising to start the moment he was out of sight. After a good deal of opposition I gained my point, and sat down upon the highest pinnacle near to watch every change.

From the opposite horizon up to the zenith the sky became of the deepest and most unfathomable blue I ever saw; from the zenith it paled gradually down to a pinkish grey, then an orange, on which floated streaks of red and purple, and lastly, a dazzling realm of gold, in the midst of which lay the blood-

red sun, now less brilliant than the sky around, and making one imagine him exhausted by his toilsome journey round the globe.

The effect of the peculiar light upon the snowy mountains to the westward was splendid, their white points reflecting every tint, those in the shade rearing their cold, blue-white crests as if in search of light and warmth.

The green of the forest grew blacker and blacker, the rocks springing out in brighter contrast, while the white foam along the coastline became distinctly visible, and strange enough, almost at the same instant, audible; for, as it frequently happens, a breeze sprang up just at sunset, increasing as the light expired; and even before we had scrambled half a mile down the mountain and found a snug rocky nook to shelter us for the night, the blast was roaring through the forest, the

great trees groaning as they strained against its power, while now and then a heavy pattering on the thick green roof above our heads, bore unmistakeable evidence of a storm. Still, so well sheltered was our little nook, that our fire burnt on steadily, only occasionally throwing up a long forked flame, as if in mockery of the blast. The night was chilly after such a hot, toilsome day, and weary both in mind and body, I dropped off asleep while eating. Waking up by nodding forward sharply upon the butt of my rifle, which, with the precaution advisable in the dangerous vicinity we were then in, lay across my knees. Rousing up, I took Tom's advice, and cooled my face, head, and hands in the stream, in whose bright waters our fire was reflected in a thousand rippling smiles and eddies. After finishing my supper—a light enough one, too, after such a day's walk—I made a pil-

low of my cap, and lay down to sleep. It was some time, however, before the repose once banished so rudely returned; and it was provoking to hear Tom snoring like a grampus, while not a sign of sleep would visit my weary eyelids.

My thoughts were soon wandering away to a far different scene, namely, the quiet little bow-windowed parlour at the doctor's, where, beside Mrs. Millard's sofa, I had heard the first sanction to my love. I thought of Miny so far off, moving evenly on from hour to hour and day to day, performing her part in the drama of life,—a part which, smooth as it seemed, had its own trials and tears, none the less that they were hidden under smiles and sunshine, and only ventured to assert their dominion when the hand of night loosed the chain and said, "Weep on; thou art alone with an all-seeing and pitying Saviour." Tears found their way to my own eyes as I

pictured to myself my darling sorrowing for me in the quiet and seclusion of her own little chamber, perhaps praying for me, with her dear face resting upon the white coverlet. I listened, almost persuading myself I might hear the words. Then I began wondering when I could hope to get a letter from her (posts being then unknown in these regions), and what she would say to me.

The storm grew fiercer as midnight approached, coming in gusts resembling peals of thunder, then dying away for a little, strange ghostly sounds broke out from the forest, whose branches, twisted and bent by the violence of the blast, groaned and shrieked as they slowly regained their natural position, then sighed wearily, as if aware that their enemy was nigh at hand and their respite short.

In the lulls between the gusts I could hear the booming thud of the waves as they broke

along the bay, mingling with the clear little trickle of the brook by my side, as it rippled over its rocky bed.

About a couple of hours after midnight the wind suddenly ceased, a long sobbing sigh thrilled through the forest, and then all was still except the pattering song of the rain-drops, the voice of the little streamlet, and the distant ocean. Even Tom had gone too fast asleep to snore, so, at last, I too fell asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

A PIGEON FOR BREAKFAST—SUNDAY IN THE
FOREST.

TOM was astir long before I awoke, and I found had been making good use of his time, a savoury perfume rising from a couple of birds roasting beside the red embers.

“You see, master, I don’t require a rifle to bring down your breakfast. Bless you! the birds jest hopped into my hand, and looked up, as much as to say, ‘Roast me, like a good fellow.’”

“What are they, Tom? They smell uncommonly nice, and that’s a capital way of cooking, too.”

“That’s native fashion ; the Maoris know how to live, bless ’em ! You should just see them broiling eels. They catch a many on ’em, as you’ll soon have good cause to know. It takes a deal to turn my stomach, but it did turn when, month after month, I saw nothing but great slimy serpents swallowed down. It was eels for breakfast, eels for dinner, eels for supper. Then they were wriggling and gaping even on the stick. I forgot to tell you how they spit them. Well, they take a long rod and peel off the bark ; then they open the eels’ mouths and sticks it in nigh upon right up through them ; and havin’ strung two or three, one takes hold of one end and another the t’other, and they holds them close over some red ashes, givin’ them a twist now and then if the beasts don’t wriggle fast enough. Yo’ needn’t laugh, master ; the life stays in ’em longer than you’d think. They are uncommonly fond of

heat, is eels; and the Maoris do say that they travel a dozen miles across the mountains on purpose to boil themselves in the hot-water wells in the interior."

Tom was evidently inclined to the marvellous, and more than half inclined to be offended at the incredulous smile I could not suppress. But fortunately the birds were ready to be eaten; so, taking one each, we began our breakfast, and in spite of having neither plates and knives and forks, got on capitally, and I, for one, never enjoyed a meal more, the best seasoning in the world undoubtedly being hunger.

Having finished, even to sucking the marrow out of the bones, and extinguished the fire—a precaution every traveller should attend to, especially in a wooded district, where a chance spark may spread it—we continued our route.

The scarcity of birds now struck me

forcibly, and I found they are seldom seen at a high level, preferring sheltered spots.

The descent was not so steep as the ascent, but more tiresome, as at any false step your feet slipped out below you, and you found yourself sprawling on your back, or sitting upon a wet cushion of moss or dead leaves. Sundry peals of laughter from Tom soon warned me that the posterior of my nether garments were showing symptoms of distress, and presently an unusually long slip and slide effected a complete breach.

"It's no use wearing cloth in New Zealand," roared Tom; "look at me—I don't mind the roots. Take them off, master; you'll find it coolish at first, but you'll soon get used to it—it's no worse than the wild natives of Scotland. And, in my opinion, master, there's a deal of truth in the way the inhabitants of a country dress. Now you'll see when you gets to the bottom whether you

or me turns out the best. Holloh! hold on, master!"

This advice was by no means unnecessary. A fickle root had slid out below my foot, and with the velocity of a rocket I found myself descending an almost perpendicular bank, luckily for my bones thickly overgrown with moss. Crash! crash! down I went, catching wildly at the branches on either side; my rifle banging against my shoulders, and sundry sharp sounds betokening a complete derangement of my habiliments.

I had a narrow escape; for just where I was stopped by a narrow ledge covered with bush, the bank changed into a precipice, with a clear fall of fifty feet.

"Lucky go that, master," said Tom, looking back at me after taking a peep over on the top of the trees below, "a miss is as good as a mile," he added, gravely, "and Solomon,

he as said it, you know, was an uncommonly clever man."

I had no breath left in me to laugh at Tom's scriptural knowledge; one, by the way, he was very proud of, and brought forward upon all sorts of occasions.

Bruised and scratched from head to foot, I would fain have sat still; but this I knew would be worse than useless, as it would only give my limbs time to stiffen and swell; and as action was the only thing to keep them free, I scrambled to my feet, and giving Tom my rifle, &c., to carry, we made a start again.

I had no more serious mishaps that day; and spurred on by pain, I really believe I got over more ground than if nothing had happened; so that by sundown we were within a ten mile walk of the Pelorus estuary.

The appearance of the road and soil had materially altered during the last few miles.

In one place we had crossed the spur of an enormous swamp, covered with flax in the most flourishing condition, some of the leaves being at least twelve feet long, while the flower stalks ran up to nearly twenty feet. As we descended too, the brushwood grew thicker, the creepers rendering our proceeding often a matter of no slight difficulty. The forest trees too changed both in kind and character, and attained an enormous size. Parrots and pigeons were fluttering about in every direction, and Tom readily caught a couple of the latter for supper, and was soon deep in the mysteries of plucking, &c., while I gathered the driest fern and sticks I could lay my hands on; but where every tree contains a shower bath, it is not an easy matter to collect anything very inflammable.

Luckily the spot we had reached was roofed in by the interlacing branches, and closed by bush and creepers. Fearful of missing his

way, Tom had made an early halt; and as half-an-hour would envelop the scene in darkness,—such a darkness too as can only be experienced in a New Zealand forest—we had no time to lose if we wished to comfort either the outer man by fire, or inner man by food. Finding I could not accomplish the fire, Tom turned the pigeons over to my care, and gave me a lesson in fire-lighting, which I had reason to be thankful for not only then, but many an after time.

He had learnt the plan from the natives, and assured me they never failed to bring a light. The way was this :—a piece of tolerably dry wood is split, and a small hollow grooved with a knife, unless, as is frequently the case, it is left by the act of splitting. This is taken in the left hand and rested against the knee, while with the right hand a small firm stick is rubbed sharply up and down the groove. Gradually smoke, then sparks rise, and in a

wonderfully short time one or both sticks burst into a flame.

Having lighted the fire, Tom rolled a brace of pigeons up in leaves, binding them round and round with long grass, the other two he spitted in the same manner as the parrots, in the morning; I watching him with the interest of a hungry and tired man.

The fire blazed up bright and high, throwing its flickering light over every thing around us, making the trunks of the trees stand out like sentinels from the mass of green behind, while the white flowers of a creeper, which just here grew in profusion, shone out like stars. As the forked flames sprang up giving us a glimpse of the mighty arms spread over us, there was something awful in the feeling; and Tom seeing my glance, exclaimed—

“It puts one a’ mind o’ the Almighty arms, master, don’t it? Ye’ll see some parlous queer things in the forest, and” continued he,

glancing round and lowering his voice, "the Maories do say as there's spirits abroad; do you believe in them, master?"

No! Tom," I replied, more inclined to think of my supper, and scenting the savory perfume emitted thereby, "No Tom, I don't."

"But I do, master; and what's more I've seen one."

He spoke too solemnly to admit a doubt that at all events he believed what he said, and in spite of me I felt a thrill of expectation steal across me as I said,

"Tell me when, Tom; perhaps I shall be converted."

"You needn't make game of me, master," said Tom, "it's as true as I'm sitting here: I saw a spirit."

"Did it speak to you, Tom?"

"No, master, it didn't; but we won't talk of them things at present. Business first,

and pleasure after. As the scripture says, 'there's a time for everythink;' so now, master, just compose yourself to eat your supper; it's precious hungry you may be, though you don't make any outcry."

I confessed I was hungry, though the pains caused by the morning's fall were still stinging my bones, and speaking rather too plainly for comfort; so uttering an ill-suppressed groan, I drew myself wearily up to the fire, and prepared to make use of my hands and teeth.

"You're uncommon stiff, master, ain't you?" questioned Tom, as he placed a roasted pigeon on a leaf and carried it over to me, "but cheer up! you've got a little breakin in this cruise, and trust me you'll never feel the same a second time. Jest you eat and be thankful; and I'll anoint your bruises, so that i' the morning you'll get up as fresh as a lark. O Lord! master, do you know there's near a

lark on the island ; I misses them more than anythink. Do you mind master, how they piped as clear as sunshine on the common round the old town? How I dream on them ;” and something very like a tear glittered in Tom’s eyes. “Master, it’s all very well talking of foreign parts, and the beauty o’ other lands, but there’s nothink like Old England.”

I felt a strong conviction that he was right ; but having made up my mind to find New Zealand a second England, I spoke accordingly, and remarked that “England had many comforts, but that New Zealand would make us find out that we could make comforts for ourselves.”

“That’s true master, true enough, but I’ve tried a many quarters, and I must say none o’ them comes nigh the old one, God bless her. It’s my idea, that we who leave her, love her a great deal more nor them as sticks to her.

It's jest for all the world like drinking or smoking; you don't care a pinch for it so long as your'e at it, and brag with the best on them about the folly o' them that can't do without it; but only give it up yourself, and doesn't a change come? that's all."

I was intent upon the bones of my pigeon, so said nothing, though Tom's practical wisdom in so saying was more personal than I cared to own to.

When we had thoroughly cleaned every bone of the first course, Tom lifted one of the green bundles, and, laying it upon a large leaf, unbound the fastenings. As he unrolled the covering a stream of oil and steam gushed out, the first of which he carefully collected in the leaf. Holding up the bird by one foot until the fat collected in the leaf, he handed the body to me telling me to eat a native-dressed pigeon. I did so, and never tasted a more delicate morsel.

The fat soon cooled into a yellowish brown lump. Then making me take off my clothes, he rubbed it smartly upon my bruised body. Long ere he had concluded his Samaritan office I was asleep. And when after six hours of refreshing slumber I awoke, I found myself sharing Tom's native blanket of flax, while my own things hung spectral-like in the dim light, evidently a subject of curiosity to a few birds which kept fluttering round and round.

"Well, Master," asked Tom," giving himself a shake, "how do you find yourself? There's nothing like oilin' to make ye forget your knocks next morning. I'll give ye another touch."

The idea of putting my clothes over the coating of oil, was by no means agreeable; besides, I hardly felt the effects of my blows.

"I think a good wash would suit me best, Tom," I said, "and if you can hit upon a hole

in the stream you got the water at, come back and I'll have a bath."

Tom departed, and I soon heard him holloo'-ing to me. So getting up I marched off carrying my outer garments in my hand, and was soon plunging and dipping in a beautifully cool natural bath, hollowed out by the action of a rapid little stream.

Having concluded my bath, toilet, &c., I finished up with a breakfast of young fern root, which tasted delightfully sweet and crisp, something like lettuce-stalks. The morning air was sharp, and I was still hanging over the fire and puffing away at my pipe, when Tom, who had been sitting very quiet, said, "You'll excuse me master, but I see'd a book in your pocket; is it the Bible, master?"

"No Tom, the Testament," I replied, taking it out and wondering what was to come next.

"May I make so bold as to ask yo' to loan it to me master?"

"Certainly," I replied; then added, "Do you read it much, Tom?"

"I'm sorry to say I don't, master; but you see this is Sunday; and one that you knows of said to me, says she, 'Tom, here's a Bible for you; yo'll find everythink within its blissed pages. Sin' then, master, I've *a notion she war right*, an' when I can't hear a parson preaching on the sabbath, I jest takes a lesson out the blissed pages that she told me on. O Lord! master, she were a woman, were your mother."

The sincerity of Tom's praise brought the tears to my eyes, and I laid my face down upon my knees to hide my emotion. "Don't take on now, master; Lord bless you! she's a deal better off than you are in this vale of tears. The Maories do say that the spirit goes right up to heaven, and keeps a watchin'

over us like a twinklin' star, and I do think it a lovely thing to believe, an when I looks up into the heavens, I sometimes tries to single out her star."

I had no idea that my dear mother had done anything more than usual for Tom, and began to feel slightly curious to hear how it was that he thought of her in this way. His story was simple, and excepting to one who had known my mother, would have appeared but a slight cause for the veneration shewn.

It seemed that his sister was my mother's only domestic for some years after she came to Slyndhurst, and that Tom, who had run off to sea a year before, came home unexpectedly. His father, who was a very violent man, had been very angry at him when he went off. So the reception the lad met with was rough enough. Tom had not been in the best school in the world to learn patience and

filial obedience ; and a terrible scene followed. His father was intoxicated, and struck Tom. He repaid the blow, and being a strong lad knocked his father down. My mother was passing, and attracted by the cries of the women, went in. She knew what sort of character Tom's father was ; so, I suppose, was not surprised, for in Tom's words, " She jest walked in, looking as white as a ghost, and taking hold on my arm she led me out of the house, and never let go or spoke till she put me at the kitchen fire where Mary was bilin' a kettle, and then says she, ' Yo're brother has been sorely tried, Mary ; make him a cup of tea, and comfort him a bit.' Oh ! master, it warn't even her takin' me by the hand, no, nor even her look, though she looked for all the world like the angels in the picture books, but it was the cup of tea that killed me—jest to think o' her instead o' readin' me a lecture and schoolin' of me, as I richly deserved for

striking the old man, to say 'make him a cup o' tea and comfort him a bit;' O Lord, sir, it finished me off altogether, an' I jest sat down and blubbered."

Tom's honest face was all in a glow when he finished; and the reader may believe that my eyes were not dry. Dear, dear, mother! guide and teacher of my boyhood, little did I think I should hear your dear name uttered with a devotion scarcely less than my own in the far away forests of New Zealand. The words, "cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days," came forcibly before me. But my thoughts were interrupted by Tom saying as he gave me back the book,

"Well, now master, if yo'll do me a kindness, yo'll read me a chapter. My eyes is not right somehow; I a'int a scholard at no time; but to-day the letters go jumpin' as if they were dazed."

I took it from him and read. When I had finished, Tom added a reverent, Amen ; and then jumping up said, "Now then, master, lets' be movin'; we've to cross the river, and get over a deal of country before sun-down."

CHAPTER VII.

A WEEPING WELCOME TO A PAH.

A MILE brought us to the edge of the forest ; and before us lay a wide flax-swamp, round one side of which we found a tolerably clear track evidently used by the natives from the way in which the branches were torn off, and here and there the remains of a fire or broken calabash.

The tribe who inhabited the shores of the Pelorus are a branch of the great Nga-te-toa ; which tribe was divided and sub-divided into various small particles after the invasion of

the Waikato from the north obliged the chief Rauparaha to vacate his hereditary lands in Waingarua and Tapoa, &c. ; and driving out the inhabitants as he retired, took possession of a new country, over which the tribe spread itself; and although each division was governed by a chief or chiefs, they all owned a sort of allegiance to Rauparaha, and were ready to accompany him to battle, at any time he chose to call upon them.

Having passed the verge of the swamp we came upon a rough plain, covered with fern and grass. The undulating nature of the ground added to the difficulty of making much way; and when the welcome sight of the river, or, rather, at this point, estuary, greeted me, I was well nigh exhausted. Plucking up my strength for a spirt we ran down the slope, and then walked with assumed dignity up to the native village, where the inhabitants were all eagerly watching our approach.

The pah was surrounded by the usual stockade; though, in this instance, without the green cloak I had seen round that of poor Okinga. There were no inside works, so that we entered direct upon the gaping inhabitants.

The scene just resembled the first pah sufficiently to send a disagreeable shudder through my body; and I could scarcely divest myself of a fear lest something equally horrible should present itself. My fear, if such I should call the sensation, was not removed by the rush made upon Tom. And then the frightful howls, yells, and shrieks that burst from the whole fraternity as they clustered round him, embracing him with sobs and tears, and then having literally rubbed noses, their peculiar method of greeting, they sat down, and covering their faces in their blankets, moaned and groaned. Some of the old women, seizing stones or shells,

struck their naked breasts and shoulders until the blood began to trickle down, when they generally threw away the stone, and cried louder than before. This performance is a "tangi," and is always gone through on meeting a friend; the value they place upon his friendship being demonstrated by the vehemence with which they "tangi." I always remarked that the old women make the most noise, and often work themselves up into a state almost like catalepsy, uttering diabolical shrieks, and shedding literally "floods of tears."

There was some strange influence in the scene; and though at first inclined to laugh, I soon found myself growing melancholy. Luckily for me the "tangi" came to a termination, and everybody began running about clustering round Tom, and talking all at once, and as loud as possible, each asking a hundred questions, and all in the same breath.

Many of them were dressed in scraps of European garments, and most incongruous they looked, tied or pushed on in all sorts of wrong ways. The few who boasted a pair, or even half a pair of trowsers, invariably buttoning them behind, presented a most laughable appearance when they favoured you with a back view. They were, saving these absurd disfigurements, fine-looking fellows, with the symmetrical limbs and well developed muscles, all the pure Maories are celebrated for. They have too a naturally graceful way of standing, not slouching like so many of their civilized brethren, but planted firmly, yet with perfect ease. They generally wear the "tonga," or blanket, and fold it round them, holding it with one hand and arm, while the other very frequently grasps either a long-handled spear, or native axe made of the magical green stone. They were all tatto'-ed, more or less, according to age; and looked

with great interest at the mark on my hand, which Tom pointed out to them. This seemed to establish me in their good graces, and I soon found myself the centre of attraction, particularly when they heard that I had left England, and come to live in New Zealand.

While Tom was giving them an account of the death of Okinga, I employed myself in looking about me, and certainly found abundance to marvel at ; and for the benefit of my readers as well to save further repetition, I may as well at this place give a minute description of a native village ; and, as every one is precisely the same, the description of one will serve for all.

First, in the centre was the chief's house, or, more properly speaking, the house in which meetings or consultations were held ; for, though called the chief, that dignitary in reality inhabited a hut similar to the rest.

The common dwellings were ranged round the palisade, and presented a very strange appearance, seldom being over six or seven feet high, and sloping down to the ground on either side. Their construction is simple, a couple of sticks, forked at one end, are stuck in the earth, six or more feet apart. Across these a ridge-pole is laid, and bound securely. A long supple branch, or thick-bodied creeper, is arched at each end, and over each fork; and across these, arch to arch, straight sticks are bound closely, forming a firm and neat frame, upon which again is laid a thick covering of rushes, tied in bundles, and over this a thatching of spear-grass, which is perfectly secure against rain or cold. They leave a narrow opening at one end, which is supposed to be the door, while sometimes, though by no means constantly, they insert a second opening in the roof or other end, a very necessary one, as they light a fire and crush them-

selves inside until they can scarcely breathe, much less move. Once or twice I have attempted to take advantage of the shelter afforded by a hut, when an unusual storm was coming down, but it was of no use. The cold wind and rain was paradise compared to the stench and suffocating smoke inside; and with watery eyes and uneasy stomach I rushed out again, and sat down to endure the pelting of at least a pure element.

There were several curious looking houses raised upon four feet, or a sort of stand. These proved to be store-houses, in which were kept kumaras, guns, powder, &c., clothes and valuables of every description. The poles, rafters, &c., were all most elaborately carved with grotesque and hideous figures, meant to represent every description of human joy, vice or anger. Right in the middle, and directly over the point of the ridge-pole, was

a large human figure, with its features horribly exaggerated, and its tongue stretched out to an unnatural degree, demonstrating derision of its enemies. The storehouses are called Na Rowaka, and are sacred or taboo'd. The carving as well as building is all done by the chiefs, a slave not being allowed to touch a stick, or even cut a piece of grass used in their construction.

While I was busily engaged looking about me, the lady portion of the village were equally busy cooking and talking. And my fair readers will not, I trust, consider me guilty of disrespect if I have purposely left their Maori sisters until I could devote a proper length of time to their service. And now, while they are attending to their domestic duties, I shall attempt to bring them before my readers even as they were brought before me.

The young girls from ten years of age,

are often very pretty, sometimes really beautiful. Their features are delicate, their skin smooth and clear, with the olive hue of the Spaniard, brightened by the transparency and ready blush of the English maiden. Their eyes are long, large, and with a soft, pleading expression, which somehow seems to ask your sympathy and protection, while the white teeth and red lips, with their roguish smile mock the feeling, openly laughing at you for being so deceived by their neighbours. In figure the women are short and slight, with that easy gait and graceful motion, so often seen among the unclothed and uncivilized, every limb moving with its own free grace, and untrammelled by disguise of either dress or etiquette.

They are always clothed in a petticoat reaching from the slender waist to the ankles, and made of flax fibre, the fineness of

the texture denoting the wearer's rank and social position. The upper part of the body is concealed either by a European shirt or gown, or a native rug; and they are so modest in shewing their charms, that they will often commit suicide for no more cause than that they have been seen undressed; while the greatest punishment a man can inflict upon an inconstant wife is to expose her naked, the certain consequence being that she destroys herself, thus *sparing* her husband's feelings, a Maori method of illustrating the old proverb, "Give a dog a bad name, &c."

The women have very long, glossy, black hair, plaited, in tails, hanging down to their knees, sometimes, and ornamented with flowers or feathers. They do not tattoo so much as the men, but, nevertheless, a few of them indulge in it to a slight degree, having a few light curves about the lips and

chin. Some of them stain their lips a pale blue, by no means thereby improving their appearance; and, as in almost every land except dear old England, women are no sooner young than they are old. They attain the climax of their beauty just when an English girl is hard at work with verbs and practising; and are wizened old women at the age the other is leaving school, to make her *débüt* in the busy world.

One thing there is in which I really believe the Maories excel all other nations—the regard with which they look upon their women and children—widely different from the Americans, or, indeed, any barbarous nation I remember. They listen to the counsel of the women, spare them any undue share of toil, and treat them with an almost refined consideration and respect. The children are admitted to all their consultations; and it is very curious to see a

naked little fellow of three years old speaking up, and giving his advice to his father and the assembled chiefs.

While I was taking notes (in my memory) of my fair friends, they were very busily engaged in the culinary art; and, at last, supper being pronounced ready, we sat down in expectation. A number of little flax baskets, which some of the girls had been plaiting, were filled with the contents of the native oven—a very primitive affair, consisting of hot stones—and were then handed round, one being placed before two or more, according to its size.

The repast consisted of pigeons, crawfish, kumaras, and a very savoury sort of stew, possessing the great advantage of being admirably hot. Pure water served as a beverage, the natives scarcely knowing the art of extracting any liquor from a berry or plant.

All the time they were eating, a dead silence prevailed; but no sooner had they finished their repast, than every tongue began performing double duty; and such a din and confusion had never until then assailed my ears. I was thoroughly relieved when Tom proposed a start, and, after some persuasion, got half-a-dozen of the men to come with us to a canoe we saw lying on the shore.

All sorts of polite and kind things passed between Tom and our hospitable friends; I came off *minus* the lining of my cap, (which, being red silk, attracted much admiration,) and my shirt collar—all, I assure you, I could spare, after the rough way I had been treated by the thorns, stones, and sticks in the forest.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUPPER WITH THE WHALERS.

THE estuary forming the mouth of the Ohi-erri, or, as it is named in compliment to H.M. brig of war, which anchored here in 1838, Pelorus river, is one of the prettiest harbours in the country. At the entrance, and where it joins Admiralty Bay, it is only about a mile in width; but almost immediately after, it widens out into a superb sheet of water; and belted in, as it is, by mountain ranges on both sides, indented by deep coves and bays, forms

a piece of water scenery I seldom saw surpassed.

We had a crew of half a dozen natives, under whose united influence the canoe shot along like a bird. This being my first experience in canoes, I shall take the opportunity of explaining the native method of building, &c.

In the first place, canoes vary considerably in point of size, some being six, some twenty-six, and some sixty feet in length. The earlier way of working was this. A fire was lighted to windward of a large straight-boled tree, and slowly burnt through far enough to permit its being pulled over by flax ropes. When down, the trunk was hollowed with fire, the outside was trimmed with stone axes. As may be imagined, the speed in manufacture has been considerably accelerated by the introduction of iron, and the carvings proportionably elaborate. The figure-head is always

carved ; but the great feature is the stern-post, the workmanship of which sometimes employed a chief for years. There are no bolts or rivets, all the fastening being done by flax ropes and caulking. Not content with tattooing themselves, they tattoo the canoe in every available part, and secure it against evil spirits by erecting a hideous carved figure at the stern.

All the propelling work is effected by paddling : sails are rarely used, indeed they are much too clumsy to be of real service. They are composed entirely of dried bullrushes tacked firmly together, and are cut in a triangular shape, and fastened upon two poles, which serve for masts. Their paddles are generally carved, as is indeed everything about a canoe, even to the buckets employed for baling out the water. The latter are a very necessary adjunct to a row, as the low sides of the frail bark are continually shipping water,

and it becomes a matter of vital importance to have both bales, and strong arms to use them too.

As we shot along, the chief, standing in the prow, led a chaunt in a loud monotonous voice, keeping time accurately with the stroke of the paddle. Now and then, by the mirth excited, I concluded the song must have a comic turn, but at that time did not know enough of their language to follow them, and I forgot to mention it to Tom, who did not seem to see the point, and sat as grave as a judge beside the chief, presenting a strong contrast to that energetic gentleman, who beat time, first with his hand, then with his feet, swelling his cheeks, rolling his eyes, and displaying an extraordinary length of tongue. And here I may as well mention that, I suppose from practice, a New Zealander can thrust out his tongue to an almost incredible extent.

We made about eight miles in the hour, and very soon reached the head of the bay, upon the opposite side from whence the walk to Port Underwood, the largest whaling station in Cloudy Bay, was to be accomplished before night; and as the day was well advanced, we had no time to linger. So bidding farewell to the natives, and paying them as I best could, with the buttons of my shooting coat, we set off on our walk.

It was almost dark when we reached the brow of the hill looking down upon the station, where the fires used in boiling down the blubber, &c., were blazing high into the air; and although it was dark down on the bay, we had veritable pillars of fire as guides, and with no greater inconvenience than sinking once or twice, and tumbling half-a-dozen times into bog holes, I got safe to our journey's end, as my first in New Zealand, proportion-

ably important in my eyes, as well as fixed upon my memory.

Tom had given me some idea of what I might expect to meet with at the station, although his description fell far short of the truth. When within a few hundred yards or so of the fires, we were greeted by the dogs; and had they not all been half-starved cowardly curs, ready to bark but slow to bite, we should have stood a bad chance. As it was, one brute, I believe more by accident than design, got hold of my jacket tail in his teeth. Tom now began shouting the various signals and pass-words used by the whalers and natives, and half-a-dozen men and women rushed up and beat off the dogs, belabouring the poor brutes most unmercifully, making them change their tones considerably. Then followed greetings, not however tangis, but hearty English hand-shaking; and having ascertained that the ship was off the port, and that at that

moment the captain was on shore, at the house of a whaler named John Guard, we made our way thither, led by one of Guard's children, who began telling us a wonderful story, of which the captain was the hero ; but although some words I made out excited my curiosity, I little imagined the truth.

Guard's house was built after the native fashion, but upon a much larger scale, and possessed the English luxuries of doors, windows, and chimney ; while in the centre stood a deal table, with a substantial supper laid out, round which were grouped the captain and two or three of the ship's officers, besides four or five men, whom I recognised as whalers.

"Mr. Tobin, by my life !" shouted the captain, jumping up to welcome me. "Never thought we should see you again, sir, and here you are all right, I hope ; at any rate, you are in the flesh, and not in the stomach

of——. Hollo ! you've changed guides, I see ; not an improvement in appearance, though."

While the captain was talking, I had taken a vacant seat at the table, and glanced round at the party, all of whom had shaken hands with Tom, who disappeared almost immediately afterwards, and did not show again that night. The man they called Guard was a pleasant, rough-looking sailor, without any special mark of interest in the outward man, though an acquaintance and friendship, dating from that hour, has left his memory as a bright spot in my life. Another man named Barrett, also a whaler, but from another station close by, was enormously fat, and seemed the very life and soul of the party. Of the other three, one only struck my attention ; and as his actions take a share in part of my narrative, and exercise their share of influence over my life, I shall give a description of him in this place.

He was rather under than over the middle height, but remarkably large-limbed, showing an enormous breadth of chest, the strength of which was evident by the way in which he lifted a large joint of beef without the slightest apparent effort. His face was not handsome exactly, but there was a fascination in it that recalled your eye, and remained on your memory afterwards. A thick, grizzly beard partially covered his lower face ; but the moustaches were rolled back, leaving the mouth distinctly visible, and this was the worst feature. And one glance was enough. No man with such a mouth could be either a true friend or an honest foe. Malice, deceit, and suspicion were as plainly written there as if you had stamped them in letters an inch long ; and even in the first hour I sat opposite to him, I could not but wonder why, with such a mark set upon his face, he should take such pains to make it visible to all, when the slight-

est fall of the thick moustache would have effectually concealed it.

His eyes were dark grey—almost black, with a melancholy but restless expression, such as you see in those of one who has passed through the darkest trials of life.

“You’ve come to settle here?” he asked abruptly, catching my eye upon him.

“Yes,” I said.

“Where?”

“I do not know; I mean to look out for myself. If the company at home are successful, it’s likely I shall join them.”

“You’ll be a fool if you do,” broke in Barrett, “no offence, young sir! but the company ain’t worth a pin; trust an old settler’s word. What do you say, Black?” And he turned to the man I have been describing.

“If they send out Colonel Wakefield they’ll succeed,” was his answer.

“Do you know Colonel Wakefield then?”

I asked eagerly ; for I had been introduced to him in London, and had conceived such a respect for him, that to tell the truth my principal reason in wishing to retain the share I had in the company was that of being near him, and having him as leader.

“No, I do not,” was the curt reply, rather an unexpected one too, when I thought of the way the first opinion had been given.

“Why then did you say they’d succeed,” pursued Barrett.

“Because I think so ; but you’ll judge for yourselves precious soon.”

“Well here’s to the company, and may they soon be here,” said Barrett ; raising his glass, “three cheers for the company.”

The toast seemed a popular one, and much talk ensued concerning the first expedition.

Barrett had been one of the seamen, and liking the appearance of the country, had

taken French leave and joined the natives, who, far from intending any threat by their demonstrations on first sight of the pioneers, had collected their energies, and dressed in their most gorgeous apparel to express their welcome. Barrett described in a ludicrous manner, the consternation excited in the ship when the mob of natives began to dance and sing; nor afterwards when I witnessed such a display myself, for the first time did I marvel at the apprehensions caused thereby.

I slept on board that night, being nothing averse to a dry mattress, after the cool beds I had been indulging in for the last few days. But before I turned in I heard an explanation of the little lad's incoherent story about the captain, whose unusual silence during the evening, had struck me more than once.

It seems that shortly after we parted com-

pany in the forest, he and his men got out of their bearings, and wandered considerably southwards of the point they were making for. In the middle of the night they were roused by rifle shots and shouts. By no means anxious to fall in with the natives, they lay perfectly still until the battle was over; and then thinking they might get past the party, and escape during the darkness, they began to move stealthily forwards. They had not proceeded far, when they saw lights before them, and came to a halt to consider what was best. The consultation ended in their deciding it would be the best way to reconnoitre, as they might be alarming themselves for no cause, the tribe possibly being a friendly one. Acting upon this, the captain and mate crept forward step by step. There was, however, no need of any such caution; the savages were too busy preparing their supper to heed anything else. Half-a-

dozen fires were burning, and round each were groups of warriors. Some were busy dressing their wounds, others arranging their head-dresses, and others, horrible to relate, disembowelling and preparing for the ovens the slaughtered carcasses of those just slain.

The heads were in general cut off, and the captain assured me he saw one of the men suck the warm blood from a head just severed from the trunk.

Disgusting and sickening as the scene was, he said neither he nor his companion could tear themselves away, and though shuddering in every nerve, they sat still, spell-bound.

When the ovens were prepared, the bodies, wrapped in leaves and grass, just in the same way pigs are cooked, were placed within, earth and embers being piled up upon the top, and while they were cooking, the natives performed a war dance, insulting in every

possible manner the bodies that remained, and the heads of those they were going to devour. Having worked themselves up to a pitch of excitement approaching to insanity, which could only be believed by an eye-witness, they sat down and ate their diabolical meal. The mate it seems had overtaxed his own nerves in staying, and although he got through the first part, when the bodies were taken out of the ovens, and the breeze carried the steam across the place where he was concealed, the poor fellow fainted, and it was more than an hour before he quite recovered his senses.

Graphically as the scene was described by the captain, I was half inclined to ridicule their horror, until the captain began to talk of the peculiar smell emanating from the steaming flesh. It was all over with me then. The conviction flashed upon me (too strongly to admit a doubt) as to the cause

of the haze and smell I had sickened at in Okinga's pah. I had felt it then; and even now when listening to the captain, it seemed to steal across my senses; and unable to stand it any longer, I made him pass over this part and to tell me the rest.

It seemed that the poor mate only recovered at daylight, and then the party struck off in a directly opposite direction, leaving, I suppose, the war-party enjoying their morning sleep.

Fear and horror lent wings to their feet, and by great good luck they hit upon a branch of the Waimea, and following the stream reached the bay, having walked for fully twenty-four hours, with scarcely a minute's cessation. Directly they were on board the captain made sail, and as soon as the tide would permit, got out of the harbour, thankful to be clear of such a spot, but carrying

away with him the remembrance of a scene that would remain with him until his dying moment.

It was doubted for many years whether cannibalism ever truly existed. That doubt has long been set at rest ; and it is acknowledged that rites, in the performance of which human flesh was devoured and human blood quaffed, have at some period or another existed in every uncivilized country. The causes stated are various ; but the most probable and general is that of revenge, either to excite the passion before the conclusion of a battle, or a lengthened war, or to gratify it, when the enemy is conquered. Cannibalism has ceased to exist among the natives of New Zealand ; and to hint to a Maori that his fathers devoured human flesh, would be as great an insult as to remind one of our gentle-blooded fellow-countrymen, that there are

historical proofs that the barons in William the Conqueror's train, the fathers of the pure Norman blood, drank red blood from the skulls of their conquered foemen.

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE AMONG A ROUGH LOT.

THE story of John Guard, one of the men I had seen the night before, was told me next day by Tom, and as it is both romantic and interesting, I shall give it.

Guard had been on board a sealing ship in the days when a number of these vessels resorted to New Zealand for the purpose of seal-catching, carrying on at the same time a small whaling trade. In one of her cruises the ship, meeting with a severe gale, had been blown upon some rocks off the bay, where she

was so hopelessly damaged as to admit of no repair. Guard, it seems, had long had a wish to settle down, and leave the hardships of a sailor's life; nothing loth, he succumbed to circumstances, built a hut, and began looking out for a partner in bed and board, and, like most of the whalers and early settlers, gaining the good-will of a native chief, he secured one of his daughters as housekeeper.

A year or two passed, during which his messmates getting tired of the life, joined chance vessels putting in for shelter, &c., and Guard was left alone. From what I gathered the years so passed were by no means prosperous ones. Seals were scarce, and most of the whalers congregated at a point in the Bay of Islands, Korrararika by name, the Missionary and Confederacy Governor's headquarters, and of which I shall have a good deal to say hereafter. In the year 1834 Guard took his wife and family a trip to Sydney,

but, on returning, the ship they were in was wrecked in a bay in the Taranaki province.

The tribes there were by no means amiable savages, and the sight of the wreck roused up all the evil passions of their nature, and coming down in numbers for the purpose of plunder, they fought with the sailors, killed several, and took Mrs. Guard and her children prisoners, while Guard himself and a few of the men got out to one of the Sugar Loaf islands, and meeting with sympathy from the natives located there, escaped in a boat to Le-awa-ti, a bay on Admiralty Sound. From here they got a passage to Sydney, where his case attracted so much attention, that H.M. ship Alligator, Captain Lambert, shortly before employed by government to salute the New Zealand flag at Kororarika, was dispatched to the spot.

The sailors were readily enough delivered, and after a time Guard's wife, who had been

very cruelly treated, was discovered to be in a village not far from Mount Egmont. The chief from whom she had experienced such ill-usage was taken prisoner and exchanged for her and her baby, but the natives still kept back the eldest child, a fine little boy, and a party of soldiers and sailors were sent on shore to demand the restoration of the boy. After a considerable time he was brought upon the shoulders of a native, who was making away with him again, when a couple of sailors ran forward, one seizing the child while the other shot the native. A skirmish took place, during which Guard got his child in his arms and swam off with him, regaining the ship, even while the fray was going on.

Since that time he had resided in Cloudy Bay. He had a snug little cottage, besides the house of entertainment I saw (which was in reality a primitive sort of inn), and a troop of handsome daughters and grand-

children, his eldest daughter having married at the mature age of thirteen.

Although I had fully intended to accompany the Captain to Coromandel, meeting Tom had rather upset my plans, and the chance offered the whalers of having a cruise after the Leviathan proved too strong for me, so I finally made up my mind to stay where I was for a time, particularly as Tom promised to guide me up to the centre of the northern island to Korrorarika, thus enabling me to prospect the whole island, as it were.

The captain did not at first enter into my views at all, but finally promised to leave my kit in charge of a missionary he knew at Korrorarika, and so we parted, never, as it happened, to meet again. Poor fellow! he was lost a short time afterwards on his voyage home to England.

Tom had appeared the morning after our

arrival dressed like a civilized being, and great was the change wrought in his aspect, not alone by the covering of his limbs, but the washing his face free of its coating of oil and red ochre; and in spite of a disfiguring gash across his face, I recognised something of the same features as in former days.

We took up our abode in an empty house belonging to an absent trader, and were soon hand-and-glove with the rough-and-ready lot forming the settlement.

The whole shore line of Cloudy Bay, especially to the west round Port Underwood, the native Wanganee, is deeply indented with small bays, each of which had, in its time, been the scene of the dissecting of whales, and presented rather a ghastly view, the white bones lying heaped in every direction, bleaching in constant rain and wind. The climate of the bay is not the pleasantest in the world, it is so shut in east, west, and

south by mountains, that while they have an undue proportion of rain and wind, they have but a small share of the blessed warmth of the sun, and never was a more appropriate name given to a place; it is in very truth "cloudy." The sky is continually the throne of heavy clouds, which pour down their contents at all times and seasons, while the sun rises late and sets soon, regularly shut out by mountains.

I should think at the time I first visited the bay there must have been about fifty Europeans settled there, all in some way connected with the whaling trade. Most, if not all, are married, or have wives "*pro tem.*," and whole troops of half-bred children. Of course there is a large number of natives all round, hanging on, as it were, to the traders. Some of the natives are capital sailors, and join the whale ships as part of their crew. While I was there a whaler came in with

two-thirds of her crew natives of Taranaki, tall, strapping fellows, ready for anything, and perfectly sober and temperate, a rare virtue among the whaling crews. The tribes originally inhabiting the shores of the bay, had, as I think I mentioned before, been driven in by the raids of E. Rauparaha, and their places filled up by portions of his people, who migrated from the northern island. Those immediately on the east shores of the bay were the Kawia, while those on the west and along the Charlotte's Sound are the portions of the Ngatiawa.

At Te-awa-iti there is a large native village, to which I paid several visits, and saw many of the native customs and ceremonies. One of the most peculiar of these was subsequent to the death of their chief, and occurred about six weeks after my arrival.

When he was quite given over by the native priests or doctors, all his friends as-

seemed to wait for death; and no sooner was the event made public than their sorrow broke forth in floods of tears, heart-rending sobs and groans. At first they sat down covering their faces with their cloaks, rocking themselves to and fro in the most melancholy manner. Then, springing up, they would throw back their blankets, and seizing a sharp shell, cut themselves until blood poured down. The wives of the deceased were loudest in their grief, and one of the oldest presented a most pitiable sight, being literally wounded in every direction; and while I was standing by her, she sank down, fainting, I believe, from loss of blood, though the priests assured the people the attua, or god, had called her soul to speak to her husband's, so that when she began to show symptoms of recovery, and with the usual light-headedness often following a long faint, talked incoherently, her words were reverently taken up by the

priests, and professedly interpreted to the awed multitude, as messages from the land of spirits.

Meanwhile, the priest who could boast near relationship performed the last offices. His face was washed with oil, and painted slightly with red ochre. Large snow-white tufts from the gannet's breast were placed in his ears. His hair was dressed in three knots, and in it a number of albatross and other feathers were arranged. A garland of a creeper, with small, star-like blossoms, was next added. He was then laid upon a frame, or low scaffolding, the posts of which were richly carved. Over him flax-mats, of the finest fibre, most carefully woven and bordered, were laid; his rifle, axe, ornaments, carved boxes, and the paddles of his canoe, were ranged round; and then the priests retiring, left him to lie in state.

Again the wailings and lamentations burst

forth; intermingled chaunts, expressive of his worth, his valour, and the loss sustained by his death, added to the solemnity of the scene. Night closed in; but a clear, blue, star-lit sky overhead imparted no soothing influence, rather increasing their sorrow. And as, one by one, the stars appeared, their eyes ranged the firmament in search of the new star, which, according to their superstition, is the form taken by the parting soul, that he may still overlook, and aid, if need be, his tribe.

All nations are more or less deeply imbued with superstition; and, although education destroys its influence, and enables the mind to cast it aside, it still clings to us in some form or other, although it may not be recognised as such, assuming the form of religion and an unacknowledged awe of the unfathomable ways of the Deity, the existence of the spirit asserting itself.

The religion of the New Zealander is of the barest and simplest nature. They believe in a hereafter of happiness, consisting in a higher and everlasting appreciation of the joys of this life. And thus it was that the slaves in olden times, and, until the spread of the Gospel, the wives of the deceased were slain, that their spirits might accompany and minister, according to their degrees of comfort. So impressed were their women with this belief that they voluntarily committed suicide; and the missionaries have found more difficulty in eradicating this custom than any other in connection with their faith.

In the instance I was describing when I was induced to digress, two of the old man's wives were found dead among the rocks the same night their lord and master died.

Each of the priests who have taken an active part in the funeral ceremony is ta-

booed. They are not allowed to touch food with their hands, no tabooed person being allowed to do so, but must be fed by his friends—a rather difficult feat, as the food must be pitched in, a touch subjecting the unfortunate delinquent to a purifying process, even more rigorous in its requirements than the taboo itself.

The chief lay in state for three days, during which natives arrived from the north island in great numbers, having undertaken in many instances a journey of above fifty miles to pay their tribute of respect to their relative. Upon the third day, the body was given up to the priests, who bore it away, and with it the mats, rifle, &c., all of which things are carefully interred with the body.

CHAPTER X.

PRACTICES OF THE NATIVES.

My house at Port Underwood belonged, as I said, to an absent whaler, who, luckily for me stayed much longer away than it seems he meant to do, when he took leave of his wife and family; and, in consequence, she and they began to entertain serious doubts as to whether he was coming back at all or not.

The worst of an alliance with a native woman is, that a man does not marry her alone, but the whole tribe, who ever after seem to consider they have as much right to

the husband's house, hearth and belongings, as he has himself. When an Englishman settles 'solus' among the natives, he is obliged to submit, with the best grace he can, to this as well as other native observances. But at the whaling stations, where the Europeans exercise authority, the case is somewhat different, and the wife forsakes her tribe for her husband's home. Still, even here, it depends much upon the determination of the man in the first days of his married life ; for if these people once get a footing, it is almost impossible to throw them off. And Guard told me a number of amusing examples where the husband had been literally obliged to fly from his friends, and betake himself and his family to some settlement out of reach of his affectionate relations.

The natives who congregate round the whaling stations, are by no means good specimens of the race in general. The vices and

crimes of civilization prove fruitful shoots when engrafted on the native stock, and drunkenness, debauchery, and disease ride rampant.

The class of men who had hitherto settled in the country were perhaps the lowest and most disreputable in the world. With very few exceptions, the most respectable of the gang were mates, &c. of whalers, who, preferring a life in which no human laws reminded them of a higher code, and where ease and sensual gratifications were obtained for the payment of an old blanket, took up their quarters on the bays frequented by their old messmates, and opened stores for their refreshment, assuming gradually the command of the district, and exercising an incredible influence over the primitive inhabitants.

While such men composed the aristocracy, some idea may be formed of the democracy, consisting of run-away sailors, malefactors

from all quarters of the globe, and escaped convicts from the neighbouring penal settlements. Port Underwood, though bad enough, God knows, was a paradise compared to the great settlement in the north, the headquarters of the church and state, from which emanated the attempts at diplomacy, that, unhappily, were received in good faith at home, and brought about those fatal and irremediable results, the tardily ripened fruits of which we are now reaping at the time this is passing through the press.

Had the colony at once, and from the date of Cook's visit, been taken under the protection of English law and justice, and an organized system of colonization, with the supervision of officers invested with full powers and authority to protect both the native rights and English settlers, been instituted capable of laying the foundation of Christianity, law, and good-fellowship, a few

years would have overcome the difficulties in that vexed question of the transfer of land. And I firmly believe that we should long ere this had a native race working (and prospering) side by side with us, as sincerely as if they were our brothers in birth, as well as religion and government. No self-acting stations such as Korrorariki, Underwood, Taranaki, &c. should have been permitted, or if permitted to gain a footing, should have been at once taken under government protection, and the administration of law insisted upon.

John Guard himself told me, that when he first arrived he found the natives kindly disposed, and eager advocates for the coming of Englishmen. They gathered round the settlement to trade with them. The young men soon became expert seamen, and were taken on board the whalers. For a long while they steadfastly resisted the temptation of the villanous compounds supplied by the

stores under the name of spirits. Gradually, however, they fell victims, and from that day their decline began. Another and equally lowering and vicious trade sprung up almost simultaneously, which was that of bartering their wives' and daughters' virtue for spirits, guns, &c. And finding what a ready market they could drive, no sooner did an Englishman make his appearance, than he had the choice of a dozen or more of the native girls, their fathers generally acting as salesmen, and reaping the benefits of the atrocious bargain.

According to Maori morals an unmarried woman may dispense her favours wherever and as often as she pleases. In fact they are as proud of their 'liaisons' as some English beauties are of the number of hearts they have broken. And it is common enough to hear the charms of a native Venus proved by the number of her lovers, or, since the British traffic, the ships she has stayed in.

After marriage the slightest levity is considered a crime, and adultery punishable by death or exposure. And most tenaciously do the women cling to their rules of modesty. It is not a pleasant subject to dwell upon, so I shall say no more about it, except where it necessarily enters into my life among them.

Tom became every day more valuable. He was cook, housemaid, valet, tailor and teacher all in one. And I never saw him put out or disheartened. The only person with whom he quarrelled was the man named Black, who still lingered at the bay; though the business which brought him there was over long before, somehow he managed to be continually with or near me. From the first the dislike I entertained for him increased rather than diminished; and as I saw more of him, it became mingled with a feeling I cannot describe as anything else but fear. Had I

been a believer in evil geniuses, I should have set him down as mine. As it was I struggled in vain against his influence, avoiding him as much as I could. Tom disliked him as much as I did, but showed it more openly, and was free from the "uncanny" influence which trammelled me.

Somehow or other I never knew how he learnt my story, even to the very fact of my engagement to Minny Millard. He must have gleaned it bit by bit; for I never directly told him, though in the many long conversations we had, he always led me to talk of myself and the past, and thus I suppose got it out; not that I knew of anything to conceal, or that I wished should remain a secret.

One day we were sitting over a bright fire smoking, while the rain pattered angrily without. He had been telling me of his home on the Wanganui, and picturing it in such glow-

ing colours, that I was seized with a desire to see it. I told him so, and instantly saw I had given him an advantage, and at the same time a conviction that this was the very object of his wishes flashed upon me, but it was too late.

"We'll start to-morrow, if you like," he said. "I've no great inducement to stay here."

"You've stayed a long time for nothink, then," growled Tom, looking inclined to bite.

"It wasn't for nothing, Tom," answered Black, laughing, and taking no notice of Tom's temper; "I've had a nice little inducement, but I am tired of her now."

"Who the devil do you mean?" Tom shouted, springing up. "Not Mary Guard?"

An angry flush rose to Black's face, and I saw his lips crush themselves together. But he did not speak: he only knocked the ashes

out of his pipe, refilling it again very coolly ; while Tom, conscious that he was betraying himself, sat down, blushing like a girl. I had long suspected Tom of entertaining a tender passion for John Guard's second daughter, and a very pretty girl she was, though of rather too free and easy a disposition to suit most men.

"Has Mary Guard struck your eye, Tom?" asked Black, as he finished lighting his pipe.

"What's that to you?" was the polite reply.

"Nothing at all," laughed Black ; "no more, I daresay, than to Martin."

Tom's face grew as black as night. For an instant I believe he suspected me ; but the next, he sprang to his feet, uttering a loud oath, swore he would go and wring it out of her, and rushed out of the hut.

"Is he drunk?" asked Black, smiling.

"No," I said; "you've brought up a sore subject: Mary is his sweetheart."

A loud laugh broke from Black's lips. "Why, boy, have you not been here long enough to know better than that? Mary Guard's free to any man who can pay either her or her d——d father. There's a pair of them, curse them. But there's no use your looking so innocent: you know it as well as I do."

"On my oath, I——"

"Pooh, pooh! bottle up your oaths for the lady over the water! Where's the harm of sucking the honey when you can get it? While the grass is growing, the horse is starving, you know."

I do not want to pretend to the possession of any finer feelings than my brothers; but I must say, the look he gave me disgusted me more than even his words. Miny's pure young face flashed upon me. The very

mention of her name in such a place, seemed contamination, and I scarcely knew whether I spoke or not, as the words burst from my lips. Black looked at me coolly, more, as I felt afterwards, as if he were measuring my strength, than merely taking heed of the words I used.

“You have a sharp temper, boy,” he said, rising and standing before me, “and I’m glad of it. There, sit down and smoke. I won’t wake the sleeping devil again. I daresay the girl’s worth love; but she must be worth more than the generality of her sex to be worth yours, and all you give up for her.”

We were both silent for a time, and my momentary passion soon died; and I began to think I had betrayed weakness in being so hasty, for, after all, he had said nothing more than the sights and actions going on round me every day might have prepared me for;

and as I sat looking at his calm, unconcerned features, shame at the passion I had betrayed was my principal feeling ; and I would have told him so, had I not disliked him more at that moment than ever before.

Presently, he laid down his pipe, and stretching himself with a long yawn, said, " Well, Martin, will you start to-morrow ? "

" Where for ? " I asked, forgetting for the moment our conversation.

" For the river, to be sure. You promised me, five minutes ago, that you'd take a look at my station. I'm not going to let you off, my boy, and there's no good hanging on here. If Tom likes to stay, let him : you don't want a valet out here. "

" I'll think of it, " I answered.

" Then you'll not go, " he replied, getting up. " I'm off at daybreak, and wish you had stuck to your word. I should like to show you what I call the heart of New Zealand. "

There's a different state of things there, too ; none of the work that brought your temper up to boiling point just now. Come, Martin, we're both Englishmen, and neither of us have herded with the stamp of men we have here. It's all very well as a matter of curiosity or gain, to fraternize with them for a while ; but come with me up among the true Maories, and you'll not repent it. Come, say yes : there's no use waiting to find whether your follower will go."

"I was not thinking of that," I said, rather nettled ; "I want to get up to Korrorariki, to meet my letters."

"Well, you can go through the country ; you'll get a guide easy enough."

"But Tom?"

"Pooh, pooh ! Tom again ! Curse the fellow, he can come too ; the girl's not worth stopping for—you'd be doing him a good turn, to get him out of her clutches. There !

you'll go—I see it in your eyes! I never was mistaken in eyes like yours: they can't play the liar. Good night! Let's shake hands upon the bargain; I'll be here for you at daybreak."

So saying, he wrung my hand, and before I could answer, had left the hut.

I sat down, to think over the prospect before me. I was very young, dear reader!—barely twenty-one; and although having been thrown upon my judgment at an earlier age than many are, had added a year or two to my age, I knew little of mankind, and my spirit chafed against the influence this man exerted over me. I hated, and yet I obeyed him. I despised, at least fancied I despised, and yet I feared him. He had probed the purest feelings of my heart, had dragged the light that purified it into the glare of day, and left the shadow of his levity lingering amongst its treasured things, and I felt lowered in my

own eyes. It was long past midnight before Tom made his appearance ; and when he did, he sat moodily down beside me.

“ You’re going then, master ?” he said.

“ Yes,” I answered, making an effort to look at ease. “ I’m going — won’t you come ? We shall cross the country to the north : it will be as near a way as another.”

“ Well, master, it may or it may not. Anyhow, there’s no manner of use crying over spilt milk. ‘ Everything’s for the best,’ the Scripture says. Let’s go to bed, and sleep on it—there’s a day’s work afore us to-morrow.”

“ Then you’ll go ?” I asked, with a sensation of relief, for until then I had no idea Tom would go.

“ Of course, I will. I aint a-goin’ to let you go alone into that man’s hands. You’re my master now, an’ I’m your faithful sarvant,

so help me God! She that's gone bound me over to sarve you, though she didn't so much as know we should ever meet again."

The mention of my mother always brought peace; and, for a time at least, I felt Tom was quite right: "Everything was for the best."

So I followed the good fellow's advice, and turned in, determined to forget my forebodings, and laugh away all distrust of my new comrade.

CHAPTER XI.

"CURRENCY LADS."

THE whalers are a race so entirely distinct from any other class of men, that they deserve a chapter to themselves. They have been the pioneers of civilization in almost all the South Sea Islands. Those who established themselves upon the shores of New Zealand were, as I said before, runaway sailors and convicts from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Their children, the descendants of native mothers, were as fine specimens of strength and natural manly

beauty as could be met with, and, as all there was slang, went by the name of "Currency Lads."

The character of the whalers is a strange compound. They unite the love of order, discipline, and cleanliness with all the lawlessness and reckless living of buccaneers. In the beginning they appear to have banded together, electing a head, or captain. Though it seems probable his authority was only recognised at sea when engaged in their trade, still, some of the captains—John Guard, for instance—contrived to extend their authority and act as lawgivers, governors, and chiefs on shore as well as at sea. Instances of this were, however, more the exception than the rule. As the settlements increased the necessity of some code of law became obvious; and the different members were regularly enrolled and bound by oath to obey certain regulations, to serve according to the articles for

the season, and to abide by the decision of their captain in all matters of doubt or difficulty. Each bay, or station, though generally closely approximating, had its own separate laws. Whaling crews are regularly enrolled, fitted out, and dispatched by Sydney traders, and so exact is the discipline, that the men work together like the crew of a man-of-war boat, and more than this I could say for no one.

It is not easy to fix the date of the establishment of these societies; the first trace recorded is this: in 1807 a man named George Bruce married a native princess, and settled ashore, copied the native manners and customs, even to the extent of being tattooed. Between this date and 1814 there is no further record of English settlers, but in that year Mr. Marsden, the father of the "Word" in New Zealand, crossed over from New South Wales, and founded a missionary set-

tlement at Korrorariki. Singularly enough, many writers attribute the spread of crime and wickedness to this very era, and account for it by the fact of convicts having concealed themselves in the company. More than this, it has been stated that the missionaries were so deceived by the protestations of three desperadoes, that they actually became responsible for them, and launched them forth as reformed characters and credible agents. It was like throwing a handful of mud into a well. The first stain past, you saw no more; the whole well had become impregnated; and so general was the diffusion, that very soon no boundary could be discovered; the evil was everywhere. During the early days communications with Sydney were necessarily precarious, but the loss thus sustained roused the colonists to energy, and at the time I visited Cloudy Bay, a regular system of trade and supply was going on.

The whaling season commences in May, last till October, and embraces what are in New Zealand the winter months. At this season the female whales come near in shore with their young calves, and are easily captured, the mother seldom or ever deserting her offspring; and as the calves are easily overtaken and struck, the poor mother falls a victim to her affection, and in trying to defend the calf is taken herself. Of course, such a system is entirely suicidal; and year by year, slowly it may be, but none the less surely, destroys the very spring of the trade. And well would it be for the whalers if they could be taught to see the truth, that they are actually destroying the very source of their wealth in thus killing the mother and offspring at the same time.*

* Time has, in a measure, forced them to acknowledge their fault, as the coast is now but rarely visited by whales, while the whole fishery has almost died

Some of the whalers are permanently settled at the stations, others are migratory, they are embodied at Sydney by some trader, are paid a portion of their wages, which they invariably spend in drink and debauchery, and are then shipped off to the particular station. Here they provide themselves with huts and temporary wives.

The latter are always native women. When the whaler arrives he goes up to the nearest pah, and bargains for a housekeeper. If she turns out badly she is sent back, and another taken in her place. If, however, as is much more frequently the case, she turns out well, she contrives to gain a wonderful influence over her lord and master, sometimes prevailing upon him to remain permanently at

out. A little wholesome moderation years ago would have obviated this, and New Zealand might at this day have been the finest whaling station in the world.

the station, or after the whaling season is over, to go to her tribe, where the relations build them a hut, and often enough keep the husband in board and bed until he has to work again.

The native women are very quick at picking up the qualities of a good housekeeper; and as one great feature with the whaler is order and cleanliness, their houses are perfect models of tidiness. They are built by the natives exactly on the principle of their own, excepting that they are a size larger. The beds, or, as they are called, "bunks," are arranged after the fashion of the berths in a ship, two deep, and curtained. A large deal table and benches are in the centre; at one side a dresser, containing a very small and carefully-tended collection of crockery-ware, and on the other are casks of provender for the establishment. Tidiness and order are the rule of the

household. Go at what time you will, excepting only a drinking meeting, and you find everything exactly in its place, and as it ought to be, bright and clean, and ready for use, while the mistress, equally clean, dressed in an English gown, her hair bright and smart, looks the very perfection of good humour. She is generally of a patient, undemonstrative disposition, ready for work at all times, a good cook, and faithful wife. Her children are always healthy and pretty, running about either perfectly naked, or only covered with an apology for a shirt. And you could not desire it to be otherwise, for what prettier object in the world can there be than a naked child of three or four years old?

The laws of a whaling company are as unchangeable as those of the Medes and Persians, and a dereliction in duty would insure instant dismissal. The men are embodied

under three heads, the headsman, the boat-steerer, and the crew. The first is the commander of a boat, and his place is at the helm, excepting only when the death-blow is to be given to their game, this is his particular duty, the steerer has to pull the bow oar, and has the honour of throwing the harpoon. The wages of all are fixed shares in the season's profits, varying according to rank. Their language is perfectly unintelligible to any but themselves, being a confused jargon, made up of English and American slang, and Maori names. Each man has a nickname, and so habitual is this use, that I have seen an old settler completely puzzled on being asked his baptismal name.

Cloudy Bay was, at the date of my arrival, the principal station, and, perhaps, the most orderly. There was one at the bay now called "Nicholson;" but of this I shall speak

shortly; the other stations, ten or twelve in number, were scattered; all were doing a fair trade, and all had remained on good terms with the natives; and although they had taken the upper hand, and kept it too, they were by no means unpopular; but, on the contrary, the natives were ready to help them, whether in war or peace, working with them, and as all were upon equal terms, none higher or lower than another, the community became more of the type of a brotherhood than any I have seen elsewhere, all distinction of colour being lost sight of in the common struggle for a livelihood.

There is a great amount of kindness and generosity concealed under the rough exterior of a whaler. If a strange ship requires either a pilot or assistance, no storm or risk seems to daunt them; and each pilot has a regularly enrolled crew, who obey him to the letter. One symptom of discontent is enough,

the captain can punish as he pleases, and always has the support of his crew.

While I was at Cloudy Bay several whalers put in for refreshment, and all gave their evidence to corroborate what I had heard of the settlers; but warned me that I should find some of the northern stations in very different hands from that I was now in.

As soon as a whale is taken and towed in alongside of the beach the cutting up begins, followed by the boiling down of the blubber. This process is called the "try works," and is generally gone through as shortly as practicable after the cutting up.

The blubber, after being cut into pieces about two foot square, is put into large iron boilers; when the oil is thus extracted a stringy dry portion remains called scrag, this burns like wood: in fact, vessels at sea make use of it entirely, obviating the necessity of carrying a large supply of fuel. It was

partly the discovery of this property of the scrag that led the whalers to give up the old custom of bringing every whale ashore to cut up, thereby incurring a great waste of time, and frequently the loss of the carcase itself, as if at any distance from a station the chances were sadly against the probability of reaching shore without a storm.

Many and most exciting are the accounts given by the whalers of their voyages, chases, and captures; and after listening to a description of one of the latter, it is impossible not to feel a portion of the excitement, and sympathise with the men who follow it as a trade, a trade which, full of hardships, dangers and uncertainty as it is, has such a fascination that they say that "no man who has once made a trial trip ever goes to anything else."

That there is danger is evident both from the accounts written by men who have been

eyewitnesses of the scenes, and the many adventures gathered from the whalers themselves, and retailed to the public. But, however sceptical a man might be, he has but to think of the proportions of a whale, and then compare the monster with the small boat and her crew, where the only weapon is a little harpoon, few, I think, will then doubt the dangers, even if they have not, as I have, seen a chase—seen the first harpoon struck, and then the little boat flying like a bird over the surface of the water, half dragged, half propelled, and last, not least, the terrible death-flurry, when the animal comes to the top to die, a death which is always preceded by frightful convulsions: convulsions which lash the water into a mimic whirlpool; and unless the greatest care is taken, the boats run a great risk of being swamped, but even the greatest watchfulness cannot always foresee a sudden turn of the dying monster, and

before the crew can escape, the boat is sometimes literally smashed by a blow of the whale's tail ; or, if not fairly hit, upset and probably two or three of the crew disabled by the blow.

Upsetting a boat is not much thought of, as all the men swim like ducks, and seem just as much at home in the water as on it, and excepting when hurt, the event causes very little trouble or alarm. It is a different matter, however, when a poor fellow finds himself launched into the deep, with a broken leg or arm.

It is one great feature, however, with these men, that they will risk anything to succour a messmate ; and thus an accident such as I have mentioned rarely ends fatally, unless, indeed, the unfortunate man has been hit on the head or back, and stupified, when in the first scramble of the upset he goes down and is lost.

When a whaler dies his wife's relations take possession of his goods and chattels. Every thing is seized, fought, and scrambled for; and very frequently so destroyed and broken in the mellée, that they are of no use to the successful candidates. His wife goes back to her tribe until she finds another husband, no very difficult matter, as a man naturally prefers a civilized wife, and is glad to fall in with one he has not the trouble of teaching from the beginning, but steps comfortably into his countryman's place.

And now, having enlightened my readers as to some of the habits of the whalers, I shall return to my journey.

Crossing over from Port Underwood to Nicholson's Bay, is generally accomplished in fifteen or sixteen hours. The boat's crew chosen by Black did it in seventeen, and got into the bay, at the north-east side of which lies the entrance to the harbour, partly con-

cealed by a bluff which divides it from Paliser Bay, and partly by a ridge forming the south-western corner of the island, while Cape Terawiti seems to block up the entrance ; on nearing, however, we found the passage nearly a mile wide, and as a strong tide was setting in, we ran up in a very short time.

The first impression on getting fairly into the harbour, was one of unmitigated admiration, increasing as we proceeded. Four miles from the mouth the width is fully three miles ; and though subject to tremendous hurricanes, and waves often rolling mountains high, was, at the time I saw it, unbroken by anything except the current. Reaching the head of the bay just at nightfall, the view of the distant mountains was one of wild and grand beauty ; the outline of a deep valley lay close before us, buried in darkness, and lights were gleaming on a small hill near, while the horizon gleamed deeply golden. •

The few natives who clustered on the beach to receive us all seemed to know Black, welcoming him, however, with a degree of restraint and fear that I could not help noticing.

Tom stood aloof until he reached the pah, when he came forward, and a regular "tangi" was the result. If Black was unpopular, Tom was decidedly the opposite; there was no doubt about it. Tom was a favourite, and particularly with the women, who crowded up, rubbed noses and cried in the most affecting manner. One girl in particular seemed overwhelmed with joy; and Tom assuredly had forgotten Mary Guard much sooner than I had believed possible after his professions, seeming nothing loth to take the "good the gods provided."

The pah was one of the largest in the south of the north island, and belonged to the Ngatiawa tribe, who seemed at war with every one, Rauparaha into the bargain, and when I

saw them, were living in hourly dread of a visit from his allies on Lake Taupo ; who, it seems, did the dirty work for the great warrior, while he was engaged in his mighty enterprises. Warepori was the chief of the tribe, and as far as I saw him then, seemed a fine noble-hearted fellow, and ready to welcome Englishmen, stating that he was sure if they came they would fight for him.

The pah was doubly fortified both by reason of its commanding position and the additional strength given by a stream which ran along its sides. We ascended by a sort of staircase, and got inside the triple palisade, where we were received by Warepori himself, who had on a pair of duck trowsers, and an old naval jacket, and spoke a combination of native English and whalers' slang, a language by no means intelligible to a stranger, although one I had become a good deal conversant with.

The first welcoming "tangi" over, eating is the next piece of hospitality, and the slaves or women prepare the ovens and food, generally sweet potatoes, young fruits, pigeons, quails, &c., carefully packed together, and stewed in the manner before described; when cooked they are served out in flax baskets, which are always made fresh for the occasion, and never used a second time. The ceremony of eating being over, a dance or song is commenced for the edification of the strangers. On the night I arrived they chose a dance, and verily a more exciting or frightful exhibition I never had the fortune to witness. It began in a startling way; we were all sitting in perfect quiet when Warepori, uttering a shrill scream, sprang in the air, leaving his clothes in a heap on the ground. He was followed by twenty or thirty of the men, then an equal number of women. The men were entirely naked, the women

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retained their petticoat and shift ; the former was, however, a little recklessly thrown about, displaying a larger proportion of their charms than they themselves were aware of.

The favourite movement is to bound in the air, uttering at the same moment a terrific shriek, and bringing the left hand down upon the left thigh with a crack almost like a pistol shot. These three movements are performed with such extraordinary regularity and precision that the ground actually trembles as the dancers alight after their great spring, while the smack on the thigh resounds through the pah.

Gradually the dancers become more and more excited. They make frightful faces, and not the most delicate gestures in the world. Example leads the way, and at the end they are blended in a confused and maddened mass, writhing, struggling and shrieking.

CHAPTER XII.

“STILL SO GENTLY STEALING O’ER ME.”

IN the course of the evening I heard that the distance intervening between this place and the Wauganui was much greater than I had anticipated. Black’s showing had made it appear a short day’s journey; and when I reproached him, he only laughed, telling me he was not going to lose the pleasure of my society for the sake of a day’s journey, more or less, so I had nothing to say, and was obliged to content myself with determining to

start across country the day after I reached his station.

We only stayed one night on Nicholson Bay, and left at daybreak for the pah called Terawiti, where we were to get a boat to take us to the mouth of the Wanganui. At this pah there was a native missionary teacher, a strange compound of impudence and cowardliness, his strongest ground of influence over the chiefs resting on his closer alliance with the white men. After experience shewed me he was a fair sample of a native teacher, they being generally prisoners taken during the great wars, and carried north, where, after being converted, they are released by the influence of the missionaries, and sent southwards to teach the Holy Gospel, being occasionally visited by a pastor, though, unfortunately, left to exercise their own petty jealousy and rapacity during the greater part of the year.

Our boat journey occupied two days, the greater part of which time we had both wind and tide in our favour. The coast changed much in character as we approached the river, while, from its curved shape, the climate seemed more equable, certainly freer from sudden gusts of wind. Mount Taranaki, better known now as Mount Egmont, pierced the sky to the north, a small column of smoke rising from its snowy peak ; while, on the east, rose a wild, magnificent mountain, likewise snow-capped, the name of which I gathered to be Tongariro, now, I believe, called one of the Tararua, a range, which lies about a hundred miles inland, but shows plainly over the level coast line.

We rested for the night at a pah on the Manawatu river, and received the usual hospitality and welcome. Had I not been feverishly anxious to reach the north, and living from day to day on the hope of my

letters, I should have done well to linger awhile, and explore the country as I went—a duty I fully intended to perform, but little knew how weak I was, and how impossible I found it to fight against the desire for home news. Night after night I lay awake, conjecturing every imaginable mishap, accident, and illness : for not one doubt of Miny's faith ever entered my mind. She was all I had on earth, and I loved her with all the trust, devotion, and fullness of a love where there is no rival—not even a mother or sister—to divide the heart. First love is always pure and unselfish. The loved one becomes, for the time, our guiding star, the centre of our ambition. In her we repose our hopes, fears, and weaknesses, joys and griefs. She is our counsellor, friend, and pride. She may be frail and full of faults, in the eyes of others : to us, she is perfect. We love her : even her faults are dear. We are content with her

companionship and sympathy. To be with her as often as possible, to tell her all our thoughts and ideas, to consult her in all our difficulties, and follow her advice as much as we can, is all we ask.

People talk of the passion of first love^{*}, but such as do have never experienced true love. First love has no passion to sully it. It is, in some degree, the same sort of love that we feel for a mother or sister : if their love, once wholly ours, is given to another, we feel alone and forsaken, but we cannot blame them. They have a new life. The old love is not lost—only become secondary to the greater. And we find out what a friend is ; for first love is only a purer and more sincere impulse of friendship.

Dear Miny was all in all to me, and now every day seemed an age until I heard from her. A letter, I felt, would satisfy me ; and if I only knew how she was,

and what she advised, I felt I could do anything.

It was in vain Black talked, and told stories of the natives: I could think of nothing but pushing on; and when we reached the mouth of the Wanganui and found no means of getting up the river, my impatience broke forth, and I began to upbraid Black with having deceived me. He bore my temper pretty patiently for a time, telling me we could get a boat a few miles up; and I daresay all would have been well, if Tom had held his tongue. But this he could not do; and seizing an opportunity when there was a lull in the conversation, he blurted out, in the voice of a man who must speak, "Ye' could expect nothing else o' a gaol-bird, master."

Before I could interpose, Black flew at him, and Tom was stretched upon the ground, felled by one blow.

"By G—d!" I shouted, my suppressed impatience bursting out, "you shall pay for this!"

"Stand back, boy! you are mad," hissed Black, speaking through his teeth, and warding me off with a pistol he had drawn from his belt.

But my blood was up—I forgot everything. I have a confused idea of a struggle, the explosion of a pistol, then a stinging pain, and all was over.

When I returned to consciousness, I was lying on a heap of mats in what, at the first glance, I thought was John Guard's hut; but looking round, I saw it was more carefully furnished, and that there was an attempt at elegance, and even refinement, that I had not before fallen in with.

I tried to lift my arm to wipe the moisture from my forehead, but I could not move it; and the pain caused by the attempt brought back such a sick faintness, that I could only

lie with my eyes shut, trying to keep my senses, and feeling as if death itself was on me.

While I lay in this way, some one came softly into the hut, and approached my bed. I did not move, a sudden impulse keeping me still.

After bending over me so closely that I felt the warm breath on my cheek, the person moved away, and seemed to sit down, and presently she—for the voice told me it was a woman—began to sing a low, monotonous, dirge-like air, but with such sweet, soft tones, that I might almost have fancied I heard a spirit voice.

Half-afraid I should disturb her if I showed I was awake, I lay still, listening with all my senses; and becoming gradually soothed and relieved in body and mind. Suddenly, her song ceased, and a man entered. It was Black, for he spoke at first aloud; then, checking himself, began to whisper,—

"Well, how's the boy now? He's had a pretty spell of it."

"He's better," answered the woman; "he'll get over the fever now, but his arm is going on slowly: the bullet is in it."

"Nonsense, the bullet is out—the arm is nothing. You want to get help, do you? Are you tired of him?"

There was a whispered answer, a laugh, and then the sound of a kiss.

"I am going north, Clari, and you shall keep him till I come back."

"What for?—what good is it? I'll go with you, and give the women charge of him. I don't like sitting beside a half-dead man all day and night. Take me with you, Kawana—I like the north."

A coarse accusation and oath broke from Black's lips.

"You lie!" exclaimed the woman in a

deep whisper, "and you know it. Take me with you, I say."

"I cannot; you must stay with him," replied Black; "I have things to do you cannot do."

"I know," she said, "you have work to do; "but, by your God, if you bring any one here, I will find a house and bed in the river."

"I am not going to part with you," said Black in a conciliatory voice. "Come, leave the boy—he is asleep—we'll go to the river; I want to see the boats."

The next minute I was alone, so he was going north, and I was to be left. How long had I been ill, and what had happened? Conjecture after conjecture rushed through my brain, but the very effort to think confused me, and for a time I lay half dreaming, fancying myself in the cottage at Slyndhurst again, and the tears came, and I cried like a

sick child. I suppose it was the effect of weakness, and an effort of nature to relieve herself. At any rate, the outburst seemed to soothe me, and my thoughts grew clearer as I lay. They were now engrossed in one thing—Black's departure for the north, and the hope that by him I might obtain the longed-for letters. So completely was I wrapt up in this, that I almost forgot to try and reach the source of my illness. The word fever seemed to afford an explanation to all but my wounded arm. I had some dreamy recollection of the scene when Tom was struck, but so indistinct, that I could make nothing of it, and dozed off again to dream of Miny and Old England.

When I awoke it was night; a fire burning in one corner alone gave light, and beside it sat a woman.

"Give me water," I gasped.

She started up, and in an instant held a cup to my lips. The cool draught was like

the richest nectar, and refreshed me more than I could have thought possible.

"You are better," she said, bathing my face with what remained in the cup, while I lay looking at her, wondering what beautiful being had come to my aid. She was a good deal taller than Miny, and although very fair, had a richness in the colour of her skin you only see in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. She had, if I may be permitted to make such a "bull," a *fair brunette* complexion. She wore a gay-coloured dress, and ornaments both in her hair, ears, and round her bare arms.

Moving quickly about the room, these glittered and danced in the firelight, casting reflections upon the walls, and in my weak, nervous state, exciting an idea that they were attendant spirits.

After bathing my face she went back to the fire, and seemed busy preparing some

food for me. My senses again began wandering, and I called out "mother!"

She started round, laid down the pan, and came to me.

"Have you a mother, boy?" she asked.

"No," I said, "not now; she was taken to heaven."

"Were you fond of her?"

The tears sprang to my eyes, and answered for me.

"You loved her?" she said. "I had a mother, and I once loved her, but she sold me."

"Sold you?" I asked, not comprehending her.

"Yes, sold me, body and soul. I will tell you why another time; tell me of *your* mother now; it will be pleasant to talk of her."

So she sat down beside me, and holding my hand firmly clasped in hers, I told her of my boyhood. Somehow, she led me on, until I found I had laid bare my heart, and

told her my love for Miny, as well as my other feelings.

"What is this girl like?" she said, abruptly.

"Who?" I asked, not knowing what she meant.

"This Miny that you love," she said.

"She is tall and fair," I answered; "her eyes are as blue as the sky at midday; her voice——"

"Hush, boy!" said the woman, putting her hand on my lips and bending down, "lie still and sleep; there is some one coming you need fear."

Before she could reach the fireplace Black entered. He came straight to my bed, and looked at me as I lay with closed eyes, affecting sleep. Then he passed on to the fire, and whispered to the woman. For some time I could not hear the words, but gradually they came to me, and I heard him say—

"Remember, you have him under your charge till I come back."

"When will that be?" asked the woman.

"Not so long as you think."

"But when? I'll know that, or I'll go with you: I swear it, and you know I will."

"Clari, you look much better in a passion; those eyes of yours require passion to brighten them. Come, Clari, one kiss, and I'm off."

"And what shall I do?" she asked, angrily.

"Nurse that boy until he is strong enough to get up, and then——"

"Well, and then?"

"Well, you can make love to him if you like. He'll be ready enough after such a spell; and gratitude will pave the way."

"What a villain you are," said the woman, in a low, hissing voice.

"Come, come, Clari, shut up; none of your fine speeches to me—I don't understand them. Good bye! One kiss."

The woman sprang to his side, and threw her arms round him.

"Not yet, not yet," she said; "surely you are not going at night?"

"I'm going now—now, this minute, so don't tarry over your farewell. I've little time."

She said nothing, but coldly held up her face. He stooped, pressed his lips to hers, then turned, and left the hut. She stood in the same attitude for some minutes, her eyes fixed on the door; then suddenly, with a low, bitter cry, she sank forward on her knees, and laid her face on the ground.

"Clari," I said, my heart bleeding for her.

She started wildly and looked up, a strange light crossed her face, and in a moment she

was at my side, bending over with an enquiring, eager look.

“Speak again, boy.”

I said, “I am sorry to see you weep.”

She shook her head, and rose up with a sad, weary motion.

“Go to sleep,” she said; “you spoke like one who is gone, and I thought it was his voice; be silent and sleep; daylight is not far distant.”

So saying, she left me, and sat down by the fire, and I saw her during the short intervals of my broken sleep still there rocking to and fro, her large eyes fixed on the light. Now and then she began to sing, or rather chaunt, in a low, sweet voice, more like the notes of a harp when the wind passes across its strings than anything I ever heard before. The sound lulled me to rest, and twice or thrice when I awoke during the night I still fancied I heard it.

The sun was far up in the heavens and shining full into the hut when I roused myself. I was alone, and lay trying to collect the events of the last few days in my mind, but my brain was so confused and weak, that it was absolutely painful to exert thought; and if one idea came with tolerable distinctness before me for a second or two, the attempt to grasp another was beyond my strength, and all became confusion.

One thing, however, I was conscious of, and that was, I felt better than I had done the preceding day. I could move with greater ease; the burning thirst was gone, and I could look steadily at an object without seeing it through a morning haze. All this was satisfactory, and I became impatient to see some one, not liking the notion of lying like a log, and alone. At last the native woman appeared; she greeted me

with a nod, and set about preparing something to eat. Although a hundred questions hung upon my lips, her face wore such a painful and contracted expression, and she appeared so thoroughly preoccupied, moving about with the air of one in a dream, or under the influence of some crushing grief, that I was silent, fearing to disturb her by my idle curiosity.

At last she brought a dish containing some boiled flour and milk up to my side, and looking at me for the first time, said—

“You are better, the fever has left you. Ah! I might have gone, after all; I was a fool to stay.”

“What do you mean, Clari?” I said; “have you stayed to nurse me? I am very sorry.”

“Are you?—what for?—because I am here?”

“No; but because you do not wish

to be, and are angry with me as the cause."

"Poor boy!" she said, tenderly; "you do not know what you are talking of. My husband has gone a journey, that is all."

The conversation of the day before flashed upon me.

"Has he gone to Korrorarika?" I asked, half starting.

"Yes."

"Then he'll bring my letters, I suppose?"

She started, and looked keenly in my face, asking, "What letters?" and when I told her, she sat for some time with her head resting on her hand, the bitter, angry look come back.

"You must get well, boy, and follow Black; he's scarcely one to carry letters."

"What do you mean?" I asked, a sus-

picion that there was something wrong rising in my mind.

“Nothing, except that you’d better not let Black get your letters. Now I am going out for a while: you can think of what I have said.”

A week passed slowly away. I got stronger every day, and was at last able to walk a mile or so without fatigue. I had tried every method to find out what had become of Tom, but all to no effect. Clari, I believe knew, but it was useless trying to get information from her. As I got better she threw off the gloomy manner she had worn at first, and soon became as gay and merry, to all appearance, as any of the girls I saw. Clari’s presence had a charm in it, even to me, and kept down a good deal of the anxiety I felt about my letters. All her troubles about her husband’s absence seemed to have departed; she never spoke of him, and if I

did, turned the conversation to something else.

At last the day came that I had determined to try and begin my journey. One of the natives had offered to act as guide. Clari had kept out of the way all the preceding evening, and did not return to the hut until daybreak. When she came in, I was lying with my eyes half open, in that sort of dreamy, half-conscious state, between sleeping and waking. She glanced once or twice at me, as if to assure herself I was sleeping, and then going out again, she returned with a hideous old native woman, whom I guessed to be a sorceress, or witch. After whispering together for some time, the old hag came close up to my mat and sat down on her heels, then taking a piece of wood from her breast, she waved it over my face, her lips moving in time, evidently repeating some incantation. The slow move-

ment gradually quickened, faster and faster, waved the wood faster and faster, rocked and muttered the old woman, until breathless and exhausted she fell back in a sort of swoon. Clari ran forward and dragged her out of the hut, fearful, I suppose, that I should see her, and little thinking I was awake. In a few minutes they returned again, and this time the woman laid a small figure of green stone upon my breast. This I knew to mean good for me, as these images are believed by the natives to act as amulets against all evil and danger. I must say I had been a little alarmed by the proceedings of the hag before this, not knowing whether she might have evil or good intentions. Now, however, I saw that it was all right, and that I was being rendered, to the best of her ability, invulnerable, and proof against spears and bullets.

Her incantations being completed, she sat

down beside the fire, and either went to sleep or pretended to sleep. Clari sat there too, but her face was turned away, so that I could not see her. Presently she rose and came to me. I looked up in her face, and saw her eyes were full of tears. Before I could speak she laid her hand upon my lips. "It is time for you to go," she whispered; "Mohia is waiting. Farewell; do not forget Clari. If your English wife comes not, another may."

Before I could say a word she had kissed my forehead, and was gone.

I saw the old woman's eyes wide open and glaring on us all the time, but I was spell-bound. Clari's emotion, even more than her words, tore away the veil from my heart. She loved me, and what did I feel?—I scarcely knew. I had no thought of wronging Miny, and yet poor Clari's hand and voice had soothed me into a sort of

dream. Fortunately for me, the dream lasted until we parted, and when consciousness came she was gone, and every moment was taking me further from temptation.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DANGEROUS PATH.

DURING the time of my sojourn in Black's hut, I had seen nothing of the natives, the first and only intercourse being when I was well enough to look out for a guide. The village lay about a day's journey further up the river, and though occasionally a party would come down, and build Raupo huts upon the banks for the purpose of fishing, they never stayed long, and as soon as they had got a supply departed. They were not a prepossessing tribe either,

and gave me an idea that they would not stand upon much ceremony, if money was in the way. The man I had fallen in with as a guide, was a fair specimen of a half-educated, partly civilized native. He affected to consider himself a European, by virtue of having been baptized by one of the missionaries at Korrorariki, and made a point of using all the Scriptural expressions he could think of, perfectly regardless as to their application. Night and morning he knelt down and repeated a prayer, though what form I never learnt. A few hours after we set out he turned upon me abruptly and asked, why the missionaries called all the rest of the English devils? I had never heard of such an accusation being launched against us before, and was rather anxious to find out the origin of it. All he could tell me, however, amounted to nothing, and it was not until some time afterwards, that

I found out the meaning, namely, that some of the missionary teachers getting very angry about the lawlessness of the Korrorarika settlers, had injudiciously compared them to a legion of devils. The story became a standing joke, and finding it was a source of great annoyance to the fathers of the church, the so-called devils delighted in designating themselves as such, and keeping up the cognomen.

The bed of the Wanganui is evidently the cleft or crack caused by volcanic action, the immediate agent having been an earthquake. In many parts enormous rocks of several hundred feet in height, and composed of solid stone, are rent in twain, sometimes irregularly and with rough jagged edges, as if torn apart, in others clear as if cut with a knife. Sometimes, too, they are so close together, that the pent-up body of water seems to roar and chafe in its struggle to

keep them apart, while in others a wide placid expanse of waters flows gently along, the heights on either side preventing a blast of wind from disturbing its smooth surface.

There is a native legend in connection with the Wanganui, which attributes its formation to the supernatural. Like almost all nations in a state of barbarism, the New Zealanders imagined every natural object, mountains, rivers, &c., endowed with a spirit. The god whose throne was in the mountain of Tongariro, accused another mountain deity with his intimacy with (I suppose, a goddess, named) Rianga, who held her court upon a mountain so called. Tongariro challenged Tarankai, and the latter being worsted took French leave of his comrades, and under cover of storms and darkness, made his way to the sea-side, and thence to the coast off New Plymouth, where he still remains. The

site of his old home became a deep dark lake, while in the path left as he journeyed along, flowed the fierce waters of the Wangaui.

As darkness closed in, the flames emitted by the Tongariro, became very visible, and had a strange awe-inspiring effect upon my spirits, increasing with the darkness; and at last unable to struggle against it, I sat down to gaze, mute and wondering at the awful sight.

A light breeze springing up brought occasionally distant murmurs, resembling the roll of artillery, and which instinctively I knew to be the groanings of the mountain. My guide could not comprehend any possible reason I could have in setting out in the night to look at the fiery mountain; nor would he understand me when I told him there were none like it in England; he in return laughed in my face, saying that as everything was

better in England, we must have bigger fires too.

The cone of Tongariro has sunk very much of late years, but is still of so enormous a height, that the flames even when quiet, can be seen at a distance of a hundred and fifty miles; and some geologists have supposed that the sinking of Tongariro, explains the rising of Taranaki; and it is from this ornamented and rendered unintelligible by the figurative way the natives have in explaining themselves, which probably leads to the formation of their numerous and often very beautiful traditions. Nor can we wonder that they should look upon such an object as a volcano with anything short of reverential, not to say superstitious awe. Among uneducated people, reverence becomes superstition; religion may drive it out, but as the mind must have something to look up to, the feeling is often all-powerful, and

beyond any control, and in the absence of true light the false rays of superstition find a resting place.

The New Zealanders are pre-eminently superstitious ; and I believe though the missionaries found it assisted them in making converts to begin with, they also discovered to their grief and annoyance, that when religion had taken possession, superstition, though conquered, was still the latent principle, and influenced every action. Fond of argument, and reasoning, great and incessant talkers, the natives were continually comparing the new faith with the old, and finding out similitudes, which their self-opinionated dispositions rendered it almost impossible to eradicate.

At first when Samuel Marsden's noble little band of pioneers landed on the shores of New Zealand, they were welcomed with open arms, listened to eagerly, and looked up

to as demi-gods. Had they immediately set about teaching the natives their mother tongue, and throwing open to them, through education, the path of knowledge to be gained by written characters, I believe they would have speedily christianized the whole nation. And not only this, but they would have engrafted a love of civilization into their nature, and opened a source of endless improvement and advantages. Instead of this, they spent their own priceless time—for in the course of missionary labour, every moment may be worth a soul's salvation—in educating themselves in the native tongue, compiling a native grammar, and translating portions of the Holy Scriptures, and all this with a labour no one who has not experienced it can possibly imagine; and all the while increasing the strength of the very barrier that it should have been their first object to lay level with the earth. It was to Professor Lee the

missionaries deputed the task of forming a grammar, two New Zealand natives, Waikato and Hongi, afterwards the great warrior of his era, came to England, and for several months resided in Professor Lee's house, at Cambridge, to assist in his arduous task ; a task the difficulty of which may be learned from the fact that the language could not express a number of sounds distinguished in our alphabet by particular letters, and after all it was found extremely difficult to teach the natives to pronounce names or Anglicized Maori.

My guide was particularly fond of shewing off his knowledge of English, and often puzzled me by his attempt to pronounce words I used ; but he was goodnatured and ready to laugh at his own mistakes.

After watching the lurid light thrown up by the volcano, for a longer time than his patience at all approved, we proceeded on

our way, and along a narrow foot-path close upon the verge of the precipices, which here overhung the river, and it was rather too exciting to be pleasant to hear the angry growl of the stream, four hundred feet below you, and be obliged to feel your own way, step by step along a path not more than a foot and a half in width. A false step, and most assuredly would the poet's words be verified,

“A plunge, a bubble, and no more.”

And as I put one foot cautiously forward to feel for a place, e'er I ventured my weight upon it, I began to wish heartily I had insisted upon making our bivouac in the open air, and left this passage till daylight. Cold sweats kept breaking out upon me as I crept along; and once I almost gave it up; for putting my foot upon a round stone it turned; and I had barely time to recover myself when it rolled over the ledge,

and I heard it rebound from rock to rock ere it reached the river's bed.

The native must have instinctively understood my fear, as it was much too dark to see anything, and he was half-a-dozen steps in front of me, but he called out my name with a laugh, making an attempt to say "stone," and telling me to "look out." Not much need of that, you may believe; as for one thing I could not see two feet in front of me, and for another I knew my life absolutely depended upon every step I made. I had neither breath nor inclination to answer the caution, and was much too deeply engrossed to pay attention to anything. Besides, I suppose the man knew the place; for he walked along as if he were upon a level road, a fact I attributed to his shoeless feet, he being thus able to grasp and feel his way, at the same time; while my shoes were continually slipping

from the loose stones, and of course I had nothing to depend upon in feeling my footing.

We were now, I supposed, nearing the end of our journey, as the guide uttered grunts of satisfaction now and then, and told me to be quick every two minutes. At length the site of the village became visible, and the twinkling lights of the fires, and never did weary wanderer greet his destination more joyfully than I did. The excitement and nervous tension of my mind for the last hour, had completely knocked me up. My nerves were still weak and unstrung from my illness, and now felt regularly deadened. My guide uttered a long sharp cry, when we sighted the village, and was answered by a tremendous whooping, barking, and shrieking. Lights began to dance about, and to my delight gradually approached the spot where we were resting. The foremost man carried a

large torch, or bunch of flag, dipped in the resin from the pine trees, and by the glare shed I had a glimpse of the horrors of our situation. It was fortunate I had not seen the path we had come, as the short look I now gained, sent my head wheeling. We were upon a shelf about four feet square, overhanging the bed of the Wanganui. How we had reached it seemed a miracle, as the only ledge I could distinguish did not appear wide enough to give a footing. I was not allowed much time to look about me, as one of the natives told me to get on his back, and let him carry me to the camp. The sight of the abyss beside me, magnified too by the uncertain glare of the torch, had put the finishing stroke to my nerves, and I had nothing for it but to lie where I was all night, or trust myself to the offer of the native. Between two evils I chose the

latter, and shutting my eyes mounted. Once only I looked up, or rather down; for we were feeling our way like cats along the face of a precipice, an immense wall of solid rock on our right, a dark bottomless ravine on our left. It was not a pleasant sight to a man with shattered nerves, and just up from the brain fever, and the worst was I could not shut my eyes to it. There is something fascinating in the aspect of such a sight, and although I felt as if my brain was turning, I stared with open eyes and an agonizing intensity of vision down into the fearful gulph; till at last the impulse to plunge in became almost overpowering. Fortunately for me the path widened and turned abruptly from the precipice just as the desire was becoming too strong for me to resist.

A burst of light and sound put the finishing stroke to my reeling senses, and with a sensation such as I could imagine death to be, I sank senseless upon the earth.

CHAPTER XIV.

BACK AMONG FRIENDS.

RETURNING consciousness was in my case no very great happiness. Every limb was aching, and my head absolutely ringing with pain. I could do nothing but close my eyes again, and lie perfectly still and silent; but as is generally the case at such times, singularly alive to all that was said or done near me, my mind running riot, and in spite of every attempt upon my part to restrain it, and fixing upon some particular thought, snatch a moment of sleep, I could exercise no

sort of control, and lay with every nerve on the stretch, catching eagerly at each sound. I had not been in this state for many minutes, when I was startled by hearing the tone of a familiar voice, and the next moment, to my intense joy, I knew it to be Tom's, and, moreover, that he was close at hand.

Here, indeed, was food for wonder and enquiry. I must be among friends, if he was at hand, and eager to catch his attention, I tried to sit up. He saw the movement, I suppose, as he instantly came to my side, and grasping my hand in his hard clasp, looked long and earnestly at me.

"You've had a tussle with death, master, but please God, you've won the day. How did you get out of Black's clutches? Curse him for a traitor and a villain! Poor boy!" he went on in a low tender voice, and stroking my head with his hand; "you fell among the Philistines very soon. But we'll resarve

the story for a day or two. Yo' 've started when yo' should have been in bed. Lucky for you, master, I had a hard head; he left me for dead!"

"He! Who?" I asked.

"That rascal, Black. Ah! the villain! the murderer! if I can get my hand on his neck, I know which of us will stop breathing first!"

Black had then attempted to murder Tom; but what of myself? Had his hand worked the cause of my illness? I suppose, Tom saw what I was thinking of, for he answered my thoughts.

"He shot you, master."

"Why Tom? I cannot remember."

"Like enough; but it 'll all come in time. Lie down now; I'll sit here till ye get a sleep, and then you'll be better able to pay heed to a long story."

So I lay back, and Tom put his hand upon my shoulder and began whistling, having an

idea, I suppose, that some sort of music was an accessory to sleep. And I did sleep— soundly and refreshingly. When I awoke my rough nurse was whistling away as indefatigably as ever.

“You’ve had a pleasant dream, master,” said Tom, “the smile has never left yo’r lips. May be yo’d tell a fellow what made yo’ look so pleased like.”

“Well, Tom, the truth is simple, I was dreaming of home and the past.”

“I thought so,” said Tom, nodding his head, “it’s mighty pleasant, no doubt; but ain’t yo’ sorry like, to stop dreaming, master, on sich like occasions? an’t it like breaking up the heart agin, to come round and see yourself in such a devil’s own land as this?”

“Well! may be ‘yes,’ Tom, may be ‘no.’ I don’t think it such a bad land; and, please God, there’s many years of home and happiness in it before me.”

"Han't yo' got enough on it, master? Lord! I thought yo'd had a sickener. Yo' will soon, if so be yo' han't as yet."

I could not help laughing at Tom's earnestness. New Zealand was evidently going down in his favour, and he seemed equally determined it should do the same in mine; for he continued,

"Yo've a fortin, han't yo', master?"

"Passing well, Tom; enough to take a tract out here."

"Curse out here! master," said Tom. "Get your fortin together, master, and go back to old England. I would, if I were yo'; that's what advice I gives. A place like this an't a land for gentlemen."

"Why, Tom! what's made you change this way? Only the other day you were all in praise of the country, and now it's the worst in the world."

"Well, I guess, as the Yankees say, I 'hev'

had something to change me. I did not tell you of Black's doings, but I will now; so 'jest' lie back and rest, while I'm spinnin' the yarn. When he gave me the blow that floored me—and yo' sprung on him, I looked up, thinking it was all over with yo'; but instead of that, you brought him down, and had it all your own way. But the murdering brute pulled out a pistol, and fired slap at you. I didn't think I'd strength to move a finger; but when I saw the flash and heard the cry you gave, I jumped up and collared the villain. He shook me off, and turned round to where you was lying, as white as a sheet and all covered with blood. I saw him get white and begin shakin' like a leaf. He got down on his knees beside you, and listened for your breathin'; and the big drops of sweat were standing upon his brow as he looked at you. I once saw a man shoot his son by mistake for another, and at that moment, Black had

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the very same look. I couldn't bear it, master, and shut my eyes, and then I heard a low hoarse voice whispering, 'Is he dead? Oh! my God! is he dead?' and looking, I saw Black, with his hands and eyes lifted up like a parson's, praying to Almighty God. Lord! master, my blood ran cold to see him lookin' that way, but just then I got sick like, and the ground began swimmin' away, and I went off into a sort o' sleep. When I woke, you were gone, but Black was there, talkin' to a couple of natives, and I lay tied and gagged upon the ground. Presently he finished talking, and they lifted me up to carry me away. He came up, and puttin' the muzzle of his pistol against my ear, said, 'If I see you again, I'll shoot you like a dog,' and, by the Lord, he will, master. That man will do what he says, so long as it's bad; good's not in his line. But I say, master, yo're all of a shake; why! yo've got the shivers or some-

thin' o' the sort," and Tom began calling for help.

The shivers that had come over me were purely nervous, but had been excited by Tom's story. A sudden idea, suspicion or conviction—call it which or what you will, flashed upon me, that Black was my father. The thought sent the blood back to my heart. It was almost too horrible to entertain for a moment; but once caught, the idea remained fixed, gaining root each moment, and I was soon raving and tossing in delirium again.

Never had man a kinder or more tender nurse than I had in Tom; and I firmly believe it was entirely owing to his great and unceasing care, that I ever recovered from this relapse, which coming upon me in the weak and debilitated state I was in, went near proving my 'quietus.' Tom had some help, it is true, in the person of Hine, the chief's daughter, who, going by his directions, was

established as nurse. My recovery was even more tedious than before. And had it not been for the interest I could not help feeling in the kindly ways and attentions of the natives, I should have had a weary time of it.

A few days after I was able to sit up, Tom came to me with a very grave face, and told me he thought as I seemed anxious for news from home, he would go on as far as the Bay of Islands and try to get my letters, and if not letters the latest news. The idea of my travelling was quite out of the question, and as getting my letters was the only thing that made me anxious, if Tom would undertake this long journey, it was all I could desire; so I thankfully embraced his offer, pledging myself to remain where I was until he came back again, which I could not expect to be in less than a month, seeing the difficulties he would

have to encounter. Still it would give me time to recruit a little; and if he brought news of the Company having made their arrangements, I might then proceed to join them at whatever point they fixed to commence operations at.

When the natives heard that I was going to stay alone with them so long, they seemed very much pleased, and offered me a wife to keep my hut tidy. This latter I declined for the present, telling them I was quite content with Hine, my kind nurse, and had no wish for a wife. The old chief looked very much surprised, then began to laugh, and having discovered some joke, in his own opinion, went off chuckling merrily to himself, and very soon I found my refusal of a wife had become a standing joke in the pah.

I felt rather dull for a few days after Tom's departure, but I was getting stronger, and as I grew able to move about a little, all feeling

of loneliness wore off, and the strange ways and habits of the people with whom I was living, gave me ample food for contemplation and thought. The books I had read before leaving England had taught me a few general ideas, and though they gave but little knowledge of the truth, they told me what to look for, and by the very blanks, shewed me where to go for information, so that I think I may safely say that during the two succeeding months I gained a closer insight into the native character, and became more interested in them than I should have been if I had lived years in the country, in the way settlers usually if not always do.

Hine, my self-constituted nurse, was a quiet, kind girl. She had long, liquid, dark eyes, with peculiarly dark, thick eye-lashes, both on the upper and lower lid; a straight nose, and small, daintily turned-up lips, a brilliant set of teeth; and last, not least, a

perfectly moulded chin. Her cheek bones were a little too wide, but that is a quality shared by some pretty women in Great Britain, and did not mar her beauty. She had a lithe and beautifully formed figure ; and as her sole dress consisted of a petticoat, with occasionally a mat hanging over her shoulders, there was ample opportunity to judge of her charms.

She had a peculiarly gentle, noiseless way of moving, gliding in and out of the room like a ray of light, or as if she had wings ; so much so, that one day I called her Pakan, which means the wing of a bird, and very soon it became the only name she was known by.

She had one of the tenderest and most impassioned natures I ever saw. Tears would spring if she saw any one suffering, and very often, when a twinge of pain made me shrink, or make a hasty exclamation, the poor girl would

spring to my side, and, laying her hand upon my lips, beg me not to groan, her bright eyes swimming in tears all the time. Seeing me reading my little bible, she at last, after giving me many hints, asked me to teach her to read ; so hour after hour we sat side by side, busily engaged generally in some romantic spot upon the banks of a stream, or the shore of the mighty river itself. Rather a dangerous amusement for a susceptible young gentleman, you will say, or think, dear reader ; and such, I grant, it was. Nor did I escape scatheless, and though the charm I already had in my heart proved strong enough to resist the pretty savagess's smiles for a time, the poison was a subtle one.

Things went on very quietly and pleasantly for ten days after Tom's departure. Then, preparations began for a great festival, a haihunga. The feast progressed, and every one was busy. Piles of provisions rose :

pigeons preserved in their own fat, parrots and ducks, eels in abundance, dried and often putrid, fish, and a few pigs—(these, however, being scarce in this part of the country, were reserved especially for the chiefs and great men)—were piled in conical heaps all along one side of the pah, every minute growing larger, as the women ran to lay down their handiwork. The smell of the stinking maize, cakes and fish, in the last stage of decomposition, became overpowering; and, upon the day before the feast, had waxed so high, that I was compelled to take up my bed, literally, and walk, crossing to windward over a running brook, and “bigging a bower” of flax and palm leaves in a lovely sheltered nook, overhanging the stream, and shaded by the drooping branches of a fuchsia tree. Pakan was away when I made the move, having gone a day’s expedition to visit some old relation; and although she had shared

my hut with me in the pah, I was rather surprised when I felt her hand on my shoulder, and, looking up, saw her pretty face, expressing a perfect chaos of wonder and curiosity. Her lips were open, and a hasty explanation of the reason for my migration was the only preventive of a thousand questions. She could not at all understand why I should go away from the smell of a feast, and looked with much amusement at my rough attempt at comfort.

CHAPTER XV.

“TEMPTATION.”

MEANWHILE, the night closed in, and wearied out with the exertion of the day, I fell asleep.

I awoke with a sensation of fear of I knew not what. I looked up, and saw Clari. She was standing bending over me; and when I opened my eyes, fell down upon her knees beside me, her tears raining down upon my face; and I, thinking it a dream, closed my eyes, until I felt her arm round me, and heard her say—

“You are angry. Why, what have I done?”

You made me love you : it is you who are to blame. I tried to let you go, but I could not. To be near you, is enough : I can lie here, so that I but hear your breath, to know that you live."

And meekly she lay, or rather crouched down, keeping her hand upon my breast.

The moon now shone bright, and I could see her face, pale and troubled. Her eyes were fixed on mine, with an eager, imploring look, her breast heaving convulsively, and her parted lips quivering as the burning breath sobbed forth. I was about to speak, when a light foot I knew to be Pakan's came up the bank, and the next instant she was standing at the opening of the hut.

Clari sprang to her feet, and, for an instant, I thought she was going to strike the girl ; but the fiery expression passed away. With a stately movement, she approached, bent down, and whispered in the

other's ear. Pakan bent her head, but said nothing, only putting a basket in Clari's hands, and then moved away.

"I have told her I am your wife," Clari said, in a firm voice; "if you take her too, I will kill her. English never can have two wives: I am yours."

"But Black,—where is he?"

"Black has left me. Bah! I care not for him: he is cruel. I come to you, Martin. You were kind to me; and when you were gone, the light remained. Your spirit stayed: I dreamt of you, thought of you—and then I followed you. Do not look away now. He will kill me, if he finds me. You must save me—hide me."

"But I cannot, Clari: I have no love to give you," I said, though my heart throbbed, and all the power of her words was stealing like fire into my soul.

"Then I will love you. I know you love

an English girl, but she is not here. When she comes, I will go, and you shall have her. I ask no more. I will be your slave, Martin. I could not live when you were gone. Where you are, I shall be, until you find another; and then, I shall go."

I could not doubt her—there was determination in every feature of her face, and a pallid hard look upon her lips, such as I have seen when an intense struggle between two hearts was going on. For a few minutes I covered my face with my hands, and tried to see the way before me. Miny's dear image rose in my memory, and tearing away my hands, I said—

"I cannot, Clari. Leave me."

She only answered by coming up to my side; and kneeling down, so as to bring her face near mine, took hold of my hands, and pressed them to her heart, while a strange smile curled her lips.

"Poor child!" she said, "why are you sending me away? Can I not stay with you"—and her voice sank in a whisper, so intense in its bitter scorn that my blood curdled—"without wronging your English wife? The sin is mine, not yours. Have you lived so long, and never sinned against her in thought or act? Ah! you blush, Martin. Then, you have; and where is the difference now? Listen, Martin. I will be your slave, your servant—nothing more; and when you are tired of me, one word shall be enough. You do not know what it has been, to see you. Black is a devil, and yet I loved him once, until you came, and taught me what Heaven might be!"

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By noon next day the pah was in a state of great bustle; hundreds had arrived, and more were still flocking in.

Some were playing at draughts, some one thing, some another ; all were busy amusing themselves until the great event of the day should come off.

Presently came the priests marching in procession, followed, in an orderly manner, by the whole assemblage.

On reaching the cemetery the priests alone entered, and going to the cave where the bones lay, collected and brought them out, chaunting aloud, while the wives and friends of the deceased all performed the "tangi," making the most frightful noise it had ever been my fortune, or, rather, misfortune to hear. Nor was it only the sense of hearing that was appalled ; seeing was equally so, as they were all provided with sharp stones, and cut themselves in every direction until the blood was trickling down, and their breasts and legs presented a horrible appearance, being literally a mass of gaping wounds. The old women

appeared the most energetic at this, and worked away with sharp stones and shells as if they were performing a pleasant amusement in place of lacerating themselves in such a dreadful manner.

All the time this was going on, and while proceeding to the bank of the river, the priests and general crowd kept up a wild monotonous chaunt, extolling the many virtues and good qualities of the chief or chiefs—for these haihungas are sometimes held in honour of several persons at the same time—telling the wives what the deceased had done, and commiserating them for the loss they had sustained, at which they howled their echo in such words as these :—

“ Oh! why were you taken, beloved? Why did the attua not carry my soul with my beloved's?”

“ Oh chief! none are like thee; why were you taken?”

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On reaching the stream the bones were carefully washed, and the remaining dried-up shreds of flesh, &c. scraped off with a shell. They were then again washed, and wrapped up in fine flax mats, woven expressly for the purpose, and presented by affectionate friends. Then they were put into a carved box and suspended between four poles.

Some few years previous to this a haihunga was attended by terrible scenes, numbers of slaves being killed as sacrifices, and some eaten by the feasters. The wives too, frequently put an end to themselves, all this being done from the belief that they would accompany the chief to the land of spirits, where he would find them useful.

This portion of the ceremony having been accomplished, the crowd entered the pah to continue their amusements. The chief seated himself in the centre and ranged the other chiefs to the right and left in the open space

the dancers were to perform in. Presently some twenty or thirty men sprang up out of their clothes, for these they had unfastened and left in a heap where they had been sitting. Pushing with wild bounds into the open space they formed in line two deep, holding each other's hands. At a given signal the movement of the dance began, in putting the right foot forward twice, then springing off the ground as high as possible, and as they light again, slapping the right hand smartly upon the thigh. This was all done in such marvellous exact time, that all came like the same action, resounding above the noise of the chaunting. They all seemed to have first-rate ears for time, and beat with hands and feet most exactly.

Although the dance began quietly enough at first, the excitement rapidly increased; and as it did so the scene became one of the most extraordinary, if not horrible, you could well

imagine. They shrieked, jumped, gesticulated, and raved like a troop of maniacs, throwing their naked bodies into the most extraordinary and disgusting attitudes, expressive of contempt for their enemies, distorting their faces, rolling their eyes, thrusting out their tongues, till I turned away, literally unable to watch them, and almost ready to imagine I saw the torments and raving of the damned.

When all were exhausted, but not till then, the war dance stopped, and was instantly succeeded by another, in which women as well as men played their part, and which pretty closely resembled the horrors of the other.

Tired and disgusted with this portion of the entertainment, I made my way to another part, where I found a group surrounding a story-teller, who was recounting a wonderful legend of the formation and discovery of the islands, which I afterwards heard him repeat.

Next I sought the gamblers, who I found

got quite as eager and desperate as any I ever saw in Europe. Here the propensity seemed even stronger, clothes, wives, children, all were placed in the scales, and sometimes all went. Verily might a paterfamilias here have exclaimed—

“What! all my pretty chickens and their dam at one fell swoop!” for *wives* and children, all went.

Almost all the male portion of the meeting were well painted with a reddish colour made up with oil, and this, added to their exertions, was by no means agreeable to the olfactory nerves, and several times forced me to get to windward. As evening approached, and with it the hour for feeding, great emotion became manifest, groups arranged themselves in circles, just as they do at a pic-nic, and silently awaited the distribution. They were uncommonly well-mannered, there being no quarrelling or jostling, and so complete was the silence, that

the chief's voice in speaking could be distinctly heard all over the camp. The food was distributed by girls, and put into the neatly platted flax baskets. Each party took their share quietly and slowly without any greediness or unseemly haste. It was marvellous to see how the piles diminished ; and as I was wandering about looking on at the decrease, I suddenly caught sight of Pakan. She was sitting beside a pile of kumaras, but looking on with such an expression of listless misery that my heart smote me. I would have spoken to her, had not the thought that my presence would only increase her sorrow, which had better wear itself either out or into submission by itself. She had, however, caught sight of me, and I saw her turn away her head, and shudder. There was something so touching in the involuntary action, so child-like and bashful in her attitude, that I could not resist the temptation of speaking to her, and

going up to the spot, addressed her by name. She looked up in my face just once, one long look, and I never shall forget it.

I hear people say they do not believe in broken hearts. I do. Twice I have seen, and felt the dreadful expression I then saw on this poor child's face—for she was nothing more—and if ever features showed feeling, the heart that lay beneath was broken. Sick and sad I turned away. I could not gaze at her longer, and even the low cry I heard wrung from her lips could not turn me. I clenched my teeth and hurried away.

CHAPTER XVI.

“TO BE OR NOT TO BE—WAR OR PEACE.”

THE sight of Pakan's grief and the share I had most unintentionally taken in bringing it about, took away all interest in what was going forward ; and when a message came from the chief inviting me to attend a meeting beside his hut, I obeyed mechanically.

I found about thirty chiefs seated in a semi-circle, all looking grave and expectant, waiting to hear a discussion as to the propriety of going to war with Te Heu Heu, a great warrior and chief, whose dominions lay on

the shores of Lake Taupo, and who had demanded a large payment in recompense for the accidental death of one of his subjects, by the explosion of a gun belonging to one of the tribe I was now with.

The speeches were warm and eloquent, accompanied by an immense amount of gesticulation, and given utterance to, while the speaker was running backward and forward in a short pace, flourishing his gun and tomahawk about, springing in the air, shrieking and weeping alternately. The great mark of a good speaker seems to be in the fact that he is able to interlard his address with quotations and proverbs. From this reason, they go so far and wide to fetch their similes, that it was often impossible to understand the exact drift of the argument ; and I got completely adrift between mists, rain, streams and thunders, all of which were constantly brought into requisition to illustrate the

whole. The second chief who spoke, was evidently the great gun of the meeting, and I did not wonder. He was a splendid specimen of a native, tall strong-limbed, with a handsome frank-looking face, upon which the disfiguring tattoo was so carefully executed as to look almost becoming. He had a rich full musical voice and spoke from his chest, not as the others did from the throat, breaking now and then into a cracked falsetto, which always had a painful effect upon me. He spoke slowly and distinctly too, and made use of some of the most beautiful similes I ever heard.

The rest of the meeting sat perfectly silent in rapt attention, not a word escaping until he had finished; then they all gave signs of admiration, though none of them seemed to agree with him, being all inclined to resent what they considered the insult put upon them by Te Heu Heu, and eager for war.

So having the majority, the war party carried the day, and with evident disappointment the orator sat down, but not until he had spoken once again, and pointing to the red tinge left by the setting sun, said :

“ Friends, you have spoken for blood, let it be according to your thoughts ; you can see the colour answering you in the sky. It is folly, folly, folly, to fight among ourselves and slay ourselves. The day is dawning when we shall have to walk through blood to save our country from the stranger. We shall have need of our warriors when that day comes ; then why send their souls from us now ? Think well of it, friends ! It is not good to plunge into the flood when you wish to keep dry. It is too late to give medicine when the lips are cold. Think well of it, my brethren ! Te Heu Heu is a great chief.”

The name of the orator was William King, pronounced by the natives, Wirumi

Kingki; he was the son of a chief of the Ngati-awa tribe, anciently possessors of the country named Mount Egmont, but whom when the country was overrun and conquered by the Waikatos, had taken refuge in various parts, principally upon Cook's Straits. Wirumi Kingki was at present visiting some friendly tribe, and thus spoke disinterestedly so far as the war was concerned, though I found afterwards that he and his father were both strong opponents to anything like permitting the English to gain land and settle. Next day Wirumi Kingki departed, as it was rumoured, to the pah of Te Heu Heu, to make another effort to keep the tribes on friendly terms, but he again failed, and intelligence reached us four days subsequently that the war party was on the march, and ere many hours were over would be in sight.

The instant the news reached the pah, a scene of the most terrific confusion began.

Warriors painting themselves and ornamenting their hair, women gathering provisions together, children delighted with the fuss, shouting and running about in everybody's way.

Before going to battle, it is the fashion to paint the face with a sort of red pigment, resembling brick dust. The hair is also rolled or plaited into long tails, then clubbed together in two or three knots round the head. Into these feathers are stuck upright, and truly present a most formidable appearance. Added to this, they strip themselves perfectly naked, and make the most hideous faces that can be imagined.

Although the enemy was expected to reach the pah before sunset, night came on, and no sign of any one was to be seen, so, scouts being sent out, the pah retired to rest as usual. I cannot say I slept; I had little fear of any danger to myself, as I knew Te Heu Heu was

a warm friend of the English. Still, the excitement was kept up by the coming and going of the scouts; and I could not but wonder how the whole army of painted and blood-thirsty warriors could lie down and sleep so calmly, knowing that, any moment, they might be raised by the war-cry of their enemies. Such proved the case, as, shortly after midnight, a scout came running into the pah, calling out that the foe was at hand. In an instant, the warriors were upon their feet. Grasping their weapons firmly in one hand, they gathered near the chief's house.

The night was star-lit, but still rather dark, and the red glare of the torches made the scene more impressive, adding still more to its wild ferociousness. The men, ranging themselves in one line, commenced the war dance with the same sort of movement I described before, but increasing in rapidity and vehemence, until they writhed, stamped,

twisted, and shrieked like very demons, simulating the greatest pain, the wildest passion, and overpowering joy by turns, alternating with anger, reproaches, scorn, and triumph. When they had finished, they rushed out of the pah, not, as it seemed to me, to charge directly upon the enemy while their blood was up, but to disperse and lie in ambush to wait for his approach. They had not long to wait, for in about half an hour I heard a gun fired, then a demoniacal yell, loud and fierce enough to wake the dead, and they were upon each other. I ran to the highest point of the hill, and looked down upon the scene of conflict, lit up by the torches and flashing powder, for the attacking tribe seemed well armed.

As daylight dawned the scene became visible, and I could distinguish the whole system of operations. Both parties were concealed in the flax and bush. Now and then one would run out and challenge an

enemy, who, if he felt disposed, answered and made a rush forward. These two would fight for a few minutes, sometimes being joined by one or two friends. Then, when they thought they had had enough of it, they would run back into the bush, shouting out opprobrious epithets to each other, until their attention was attracted by another warlike couple.

At midday both parties came out of their concealment, and forming upon a large open space, each danced their war-dance; this time, however, ending in a *melée* and hand to hand fight, in which I noticed many of the women taking part. After an hours' hard fighting the palm of victory rested in the hands of the enemy, and Te Heu Heu shouted out his cry of conquest. For a short time all was silence, the more impressive owing to the frightful din that had preceded it.

Then women from the camp ran down searching for their husbands, fathers, &c., and

throwing themselves upon their mangled dead or dying bodies the air resounded with shrieks of grief.

The conquerors plundered the pah, killing whoever they listed, and making others prisoners. Among the latter were Clari and myself, I having appealed to Te Heu Heu for protection, and he taking this plan of affording it by tabooing me as his own property.

I had heard so much of the cannibal propensities of the New Zealanders, that I fully expected now to witness an example ; but I did not. And how I did not was thus : no sooner had I claimed and obtained the chief's protection, than he despatched us under a guard of honour to his own pah on Lake Taupo, a considerable journey, but performed partly in a litter made of flax net-work, stretched along two poles which are borne by four men.

In this very comfortable way I got over the

journey, and in fact slept nearly all the way, the swinging motion given by the stepping of the men, causing a delightful drowsy sort of feeling. The only regret I experienced was missing what I afterwards heard was some of the finest scenery in the country.

Reaching the pah of Te Heu Heu at night-fall, I had no impressions then to record, and my only remembrance is of a hot stinking hut, into which I was thrust, and which I really believe would have been the death of me, had not Clari come to my aid, and getting an old priest on her side, persuaded him to let me have his hut, I being tabooed. This after a great deal of opposition and much coaxing the old fellow consented to, and I was speedily lying upon a deliciously soft pile of mats, in an open airy hut, happily well ventilated, and free from smoke and bad smells, both, in my present weak state, strong opponents to convalescence.

Eating being necessary, and not being allowable under the roof of the priest's holy house, I had to go into the verandah, and satisfy my hunger with a sour horrible sort of pudding made of berries, which somewhat resemble sour plums or black-thorn berries (sloes), and seemed to me to be pounded down stones and all—quite “promiscuous” in fact, and anything but pleasant if you attempted to masticate them, and did not follow the native fashion of bolting everything.

Clari had tried in vain to get something more palatable, but could obtain nothing better; so with all the powers of her bright eyes and sweet voice tried like a true woman to brighten my care, and sweeten the horrid mess.

Clari had changed very much since she first installed herself as my companion. Her voice and manner softened. I saw nothing of the violent bursts of temper which had made her

appear almost a maniac. She was gentle, obedient and careful to forestall my slightest wish, untiring in every thing that seemed to her likely to alleviate the irksomeness of my situation, and nursing me day and night with the most tender solicitude. Once or twice only I noticed a flash of passion in her eye, and soon discovered the reason. I had been dreaming of poor Miny, and spoken her name aloud.

Poor Miny! I scarcely thought of her then. If the thought would force its way upon me, I thrust it aside, calming my conscience by the reflection that I had not been a free agent; and that any other man, placed in the same position, would have acted as I had done. Poor comfort after all! and but a thin veil to throw over a heart, stung with the bitter consciousness of its offence, and where the very harbouring a thought of the innocence and goodness of the pure love seemed a

crime. Alas! how soon this feeling fades away! Well it would be for us if we could feel more truly that vice and virtue cannot reign together, and that we must either serve God or the devil.

I had from the first pitied Clari, and so allowed myself to think of her when I thought we should meet no more. There seemed no danger, and the ring of her clear voice, the fiery glance that melted into an indescribable expression when it met mine, even the thrilling touch felt by her hand, all these floated round me, so that when she appeared my heart had been ready for her.

For a couple of days after our arrival at Lake Taupo nothing was heard of the war party, and some anxiety began to manifest itself. I was not the least anxious, particularly as to the fate of some of those who had been kind to me, but nothing transpired, and not till the third day did any intelligence

arrive; then it was of victory, and that the chief was returning in triumph with a hundred heads and as many slaves. Great was the rejoicing at this news; the men dressed themselves in their war-paint and feathers; the women anointed themselves with paint and rancid oil, making themselves more fascinating according to their primitive ideas, and so horribly fragrant, that I was fain to take refuge as far away from the group of beauty as I could, causing thereby many inquiring glances and sly inuendoes from the fair ladies whose vanity attributed my conduct to a very different cause.

Having armed themselves, the whole pah turned out to receive the conquerors; and as soon as they appeared in sight, began to howl and shout without any intermission until the warriors were close at hand, when they embraced, and began the native welcome or "tangi," sitting down and covering their faces

with their mats, while they sobbed piteously, weeping floods of tears.

I have often marvelled how it was possible for these people to weep as they did, for the tears absolutely poured down their cheeks, while the most heartrending sobs are heard, such as appear to proceed from their inmost soul. The old women generally perform best, and make the most noise, as well as shed the most tears ; but the men play no light part in the drama.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DREAM TERRIBLY FULFILLED.

WHEN the returning friends had been sufficiently welcomed, and the "tangi" had ceased, preparations for a feast of rejoicing began, the newly-arrived slaves prepared the fires, or native ovens, and pounded the fern root, potatoes, &c. into cakes. All the while this was going forward, the great warriors were bragging of what they had done, how they had slain the enemy by the dozen, and how one had swallowed his enemy's brains, another his eyes, another eaten him entirely, and so forth. It was evident

now that they did not wish me to be present at their horrible feast, which they know well is abhorrent to European ideas, and which we have from our earliest intercourse with them, taken great pains to prevent. And in this instance the great chief came to me and entered into a description of the duties of a warrior, one of which was to devour his brave enemy; and when I observed how dreadful such a course appeared to me, he at once began to abuse cannibalism, asserting that he too abhorred it, but that he could not abolish it, as the people liked it; devouring the flesh of an enemy, particularly if that enemy be a brave and noted warrior. I myself am convinced that this is the true cause of the horrible custom, and not merely a brutal passion of revenge.

He then gave me a new version of its origin, asserting that the first who ate human flesh was one of the great ancestors of the

Maories, whose wife played false with his friend, and in revenge the exasperated husband cooked and ate the lover's flesh, telling his wife that he would eat her too if she ever behaved so badly again.

While another story runs, that two brothers, Tahetia and Tahinga, went to fish. The anchor having caught at the bottom of the sea, they could not pull it up to go home. In their dilemma Tahetia volunteered to dive and extricate it : but while he was under water his brother cut the rope with a shell and paddled off. When the drowned man's sons grew up they were determined to revenge themselves upon him who had destroyed their father. So they planned earnestly together, and at last determined to eat the sons of their father's murderer, and thus cannibalism was commenced.

I experienced the kindest and most considerate treatment from Te Heu Heu, who was

one of the finest specimens of a Maori I ever saw, and with an intellect which, if cultivated, must have raised him far above his fellow-men. He was particularly gentle and kind in his manner, and very anxious to learn all he could of England, and how the English people lived, whether they fought or not, and was very much surprised when I told him they did not fight with people of their own country.

Every day I spent an hour or two in conversation with the chief, answering his numberless questions, many of which rather puzzled me. He seemed particularly amused when he managed to pose me, and chuckled and laughed most heartily to himself, telling me he could tell me everything about New Zealand. He had three wives, a moderate number for so great a man.

The first wife was very handsome, and half European, the daughter of a woman who had realized an enormous fortune for a Maori, by

paying visits to the ships, where, if reports said the truth, she was not particular what she appropriated, besides always extracting a larger present from her friends than any of the other women ever did.

She had three daughters, all of whom she kept away in the country, and never allowed to approach the sea, determined to do as much as she could to keep them out of the same line of life as she herself had voluntarily chosen. When she died she left them each a store of money and precious things. Te Heu Heu took one of them to wife, and finding her so modest and charming, placed her over the rest of the household, where she ruled when I saw her.

Te Heu Heu had a great ambition to be learned, and did every thing in his power to find out what I thought of his system of management; and very soon I found I was in reality acting as a sort of prime minister to

the chief, and I am happy to say, earning the golden opinions of his Court.

The Maories place great faith in dreams, and imagine they are sent from heaven as direct agents to control or influence the children of the earth. They think that then the soul leaves the body and becomes one with the spirits of departed friends, from whom it hears all that is likely to befall the body. Dreams are not interpreted literally but allegorically. Thus to dream of seeing a friend eating, if he does not offer a portion of the food to you, is a certain sign of death. Or to dream of ascending a precipice to a pah on a height without reaching it, is a token that the dreamer will fail in whatever he attempts directly after such a warning.

A curious coincidence happened a short time after I came to Taupo, and which, serving as it did to corroborate the superstition of the natives, made a great impression

upon me. According to their belief, the act of dreaming of a dead relative means death to the living. One day, a native came to me in great distress ; he told me he had the night before dreamt that he was talking with his father, who had died long ago, and as such a vision clearly foretold his own death, he had come to me to ask what I thought, and whether I could avert the evil. Of course I laughed at the idea of putting faith in dreams, and explained as clearly as I could that they were only the indistinct workings of the brain, uncontrolled by our consciousness or the power of our will. The native, though apparently understanding what I said, would not apply it to himself, and kept on saying that it might be so to an Englishman, but it was not so to a Maori. I talked and reasoned with him for a couple of hours at least, doing my best with the knowledge of his language I possessed, to instil something of my belief

into his mind, but it was useless. He grew more convinced and positive as to his own creed every moment. Being in perfect health and a strong, hearty-looking man, it seemed to me almost absurd combatting any longer with his superstition, and I had made up my mind to tell him to go away, when he burst into tears and said, "It is no use telling me; I shall go to my father. I feel it here in my heart," and he laid his hand upon his breast.

"Nonsense, man," said I, though I was struck forcibly by the earnest expression and the ardent conviction of truth depicted on his face, "there's no harm going to happen to you; stay here with me if you are frightened."

He sat down by the fire, and leaning his head upon his knees, fell fast asleep. It was a hot, heavy day, with a thickness in the atmosphere strongly indicative, and usually the forerunner, of a thunder storm. Such an

influence in the air has generally the effect of causing drowsiness, and somehow or other I, too, fell asleep. I think I must have slept for about an hour, when I was startled into consciousness by one of the most terrific peals of thunder I ever heard. I started up, with a sensation as if my head had been struck by a heavy blow. I could not see anything. My eyes and face were tingling sharply with excruciating agony. I had been struck by lightning, or, at least, the power of the electric fluid had passed over me. I knew there was a large bucket or calabash of water near, and making my way to it, plunged in my head, keeping it there as long as I could, then just recovering breath, and plunging it back again. This I repeated several times, experiencing relief each time. At last my senses seemed to return, the painful feeling of being unable to think passed off. Gradually things around me became visible, in-

distinctly and wavingly, but still I saw them, and the words "Thank God!" rose involuntarily to my lips. As the power of vision gathered, and I could trace the objects in the hut, I noticed a dark figure lying in a heap beside the fire-place. I made my way to it, rather staggeringly, for my legs seemed to give as I walked, and stooping down, I saw it was the native who had come to tell me of his dream. His face was drawn as if in intense agony, and had a blue, livid appearance, such as I never saw before. His eyes, which were wide open, were perfectly colourless, a small ring shewing where the pupil had been, and around his lips I saw a thick white frothy matter mixed with blood, the features already discolouring and swelling.

I had raised him partly up, and when I let go, the body did not stiffen out like an ordinary dead body, but collapsed, as it were, sinking down together as if there was not a

bone in it, the head fell back, and the horrible white sightless eyes, with their never-to-be-forgotten look of agony, were turned to mine. It was truly a horrible sight, and one that haunted me for many a day. The poor fellow's presentiment and dream had been singularly prophetic; he had been struck by the lightning, and lay there a lifeless form, within twenty-four hours after his dream of warning. The storm thundered and rolled on unheeded for a long time; I had covered my eyes with my hands, and I did not dare to move, lest I should see those terrible white eyeballs. At last, to my infinite relief, I heard a light footstep running hastily up the bank leading to my hut, and Clari rushed in, in a paroxysm of fear. It required all my powers of persuasion to convince her that I was not injured. She felt me, gazed into my eyes, listened to my heart,—and did everything that suggested itself, to see if the actions

of life were going on as they ought to do, and even when there was no room to doubt my vitality, she kept her head against my breast listening to my heart. At last I succeeded in drawing her attention to the native, by telling her his story, not, however, venturing to look towards him myself, until she had thrown his mat over his face.

I have mentioned this instance as the most striking fulfilment of a dream that came before me, though many more almost equally so happened in after years; still some of these later might have been assisted by natural impressions and morbid superstitions, which in the first case could have no influence.

Witchcraft is universally believed in, and the old hags who pretend to practise it drive a first-rate trade, by summoning the attuas, or spirits of the dead, making them foretell the future. Most of these women live quite apart from the rest of the tribe in solitary

huts, ornamented with particularly hideous figures, and built in a form peculiar to themselves. They are, of course, strictly tabooed, and very much feared, a native taking any route, however circuitous, to avoid one of them. And yet the witch is consulted upon every important occasion, and her word literally often makes or mars a people, as to her the chief appeals before a battle or even declaring war, asking whether success will attend his arms. If the prophetess says "no," he tries his best to come to terms with his adversary and avoid the unhappy result, but if compelled to fight, makes offerings to the attua to bribe him, to give a more favourable decision.

The priests also are supposed to have the power of calling up spiritual aid and consulting with attuas. One of the methods by which they decide upon a person's fate in a coming fight is to put up a number of

wooden pegs, across the top of which they rest or balance a piece of wood. This the inquirer watches for a certain time; that is to say, while the priest recites or chaunts a certain number of incantations, which are equivalent to prayers. If the balancing stick falls the man looks upon death as certain; if it remains he may go to the fight with a cheerful countenance, being invulnerable through the power of his attua.

There seems to be no climax or limit to their faith in charms and omens; the latter, especially, are the bane of their existence, and the former are the forerunners of every act in the drama of life; for instance, when on a journey, and dragging a canoe overland, as is often the case, if the ground proves treacherous or difficult for them, they repeat a charm, and setting to work with renewed good-will and full faith in the power of this same charm, seldom fail to accomplish their

purpose. They have especial charms to raise or decrease the wind, to bring rain, or to keep it away, to cure every sort of illness,—indeed, for everything, from marrying a wife to catching an eel, or curing the toothache. The latter would be invaluable to some of our English advertizing quacks, and “Ha! ha! cured in an instant!” would sink in the shade.

Talking of eels, the inhabitants on Lake Taupo are especially addicted to eating them, and are very industrious and ingenious in their method of catching them. Many a time I thought of Tom’s repugnance to “the serpents.” I soon began to dislike them quite as much. They appeared at all times and at all meals, morning, noon, and night; and often when half asleep beside my hut, I’ve seen them wriggling before the fire on the sticks, or long flax strings they threaded them on to roast them. Cooks in England say they get used

to being skinned; and in New Zealand a slave cook will laugh in your face if you hint at the possibility of an eel being endowed with feeling.

Second sight is believed in, and some cases, I own, puzzled me most completely. One instance being closely connected with myself, I shall relate it here.

One evening Clari and I were sitting upon the shore of the lake watching the steamy clouds that hover almost constantly in fantastic and beautiful forms over the lofty peaks of Tongariro. We had been talking of Tom, wondering what the result of his journey would be, when, not getting an answer to a question I had asked twice over, I turned round towards Clari, and was startled by the strange expression that had come over her face. She was very pale, her eyes bright and dilated, her lips parted, and occasionally moving rapidly, as if she was speaking,

though not a vestige of sound issued from them. Following the direction of her gaze, I looked out towards the far shore of the lake, but I could see nothing but a light mist floating along the water's edge. An inquiry into the meaning of her look died away upon my lips, and with my eyes rested on her face I sat waiting. At last she covered her face and leant forward, heaving a long sigh like one awaking from a dream.

"What is it, Clari?" I whispered; "what do you see?"

"What is she like, Martin?" she exclaimed passionately, and looking at me. "This English sweetheart you love so well." Then before I could answer she went on; "But what is the good of asking?—I know. I could not be wrong, for I saw your spirit standing by her side. She will never be your wife, Martin—she has married another. Poor boy!" and she bent towards me as I sat

awestruck and scarcely breathing. There was something so awful in the manner in which the truth—for I felt in my very soul it was the truth—had reached me; something so wild in Clari's fierce eyes gleaming with triumph, though her voice was low and commiserative. I could not define my fears—if they were fears, indeed. "You want to be sure, Martin," broke in Clari, after a time; "shall I describe it?" and she did so. The quaint old church, with its gallery and gables, the doctor, his wife, Mr. Carey, Miny last, and then Frank Carey—it was he who had robbed me of my bride.

END OF VOL. I.

